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HARLES THE TWELFTH
KING OF SWEDEN

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CHARLES THE TWELFTH
KING OF SWEDEN

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CHARLES THE TWELFTH KING OF SWEDEN

TRANSLATED FROM THE MANUSCRIPT
OF CARL GUSTAFSON KLINGSPOR

By JOHN A. GADE

With Illustrations

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TO

H. W. S.

AN AMERICAN GENTLEMAN
MODEST AND GENEROUS

PREFACE

Two centuries ago when the kingdoms of Northern Europe were struggling for supremacy on the Baltic and control of the narrow portal to the sea, there appeared a young prince, the marvel of his age, who made himself the arbiter of these kingdoms and of their rulers. The military successes of Charles the Twelfth of Sweden even forced obsequious consultation from the greater nations beyond the fields of his conquest.

To-day when mightier forces are contending on the same battlefields and the same cities are lost and won, this old chronicle may perhaps claim a special interest.

It may also appeal to those students of history who have at some time come under the spell of the young conqueror, who have felt the inspiration of a character built on a few strong, ideal lines, the sterner ones softened by an unsurpassed power of tender human attachments.

The quaint Swedish of Colonel Klingspor seemed to call for something similar as I told his story in English. In my attempt at such a rendering, as well as in the softer coloring of the tale, I owe much to Professor Robert P. Utter of Amherst College, who has had wide experience with the English of the period.

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University and to the Harvard Library for the readiness with which they placed valuable books at my disposal; to Miss Hanna Astrup Larsen, and to Mr. R. T. Nichol.

My mother knows Colonel Klingspor as well as I do.

JOHN ALLYNE GADE

September, 1916

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

THE author of this chronicle, Carl Gustafson Klingspor, was born in Stockholm in 1665, and lived until his seventy-eighth year, or to 1742. Like his father before him, he entered the household of the King as a mere lad, serving in his early teens as page to Charles XI, and as an officer as soon as he was old enough to wield a sword and sit a horse decently. From his several travels in the retinue of Swedish ambassadors, his wide-awake and impressionable mind gained an early development and a wider vision of men and affairs than usually fell to the lot of young noblemen educated at the Scandinavian courts of his day. His sensitive temperament, and sunny, responsive nature as well as his gallant, dashing qualities had won him the confidence and affectionate friendship of several of the great soldiers and statesmen who, with the beginning of the reign of Charles the Twelfth, were shortly to pass from the stage.

The boy King, who had known in constant and friendly intimacy the young soldier of his father's court, naturally turned to him when entering upon his wars, and Klingspor rose through the years 1700–1709, from a lieutenant to a colonel, serving as a member of that most famous and glorious corps of Drabants. He took part in the landing in Denmark, and in the battles of Narva and the Düna. During the last cavalry charges at the latter, he was badly wounded in the thigh; but,

refusing to stay behind the army, was carried along with it, from time to time falling off the horse he still believed himself strong enough to sit. At last, at Altranstädt, the surgeons, by good fortune rather than by skill, effected the slight operation necessary to make the bones knit, and the brave Colonel fought and suffered through the terrible campaigns of 1708–9, following like a faithful dog the litter of his master throughout the disaster of Poltava and across the desert to Bender, and finally back to Stralsund.

From the letters and documents which have been found, it is difficult to judge exactly what part he played in the fortunes of King Charles during the last years of the long stay in Turkey, or in the Norwegian campaigns; but it is positive that he took part in the siege of Fredrikshal, and also, that he later, though still in favor, and encouraged to return, held aloof from the court of Ulrica Eleanora and her consort, Frederick I. Instead, the scarred and storm-tossed Colonel returned to the impoverished and much curtailed country estate that he had inherited from his father, and that his good wife had saved from the general wreckage.

Even in his old age, the soldier seemed to have kept the sanity of his views and clearly to recognize the causes of his country's misfortunes in opposition to the idolatry with which he regarded the memory of his great leader. Speaking freely and fearlessly of all that had led to Sweden's ruin, as well as of the only possible remedy, he finally became an unwelcome guest in Stockholm, despite the glorious record of almost half a century of faithful service.

And so, with an almost unequaled collection of letters and memoirs at his disposal as well as a remarkable memory of all he had seen, the Colonel sat down in his last days and rewrote or interleaved the earlier pages of the diary he had always faithfully kept. Taken as a whole, it certainly forms, one of the most veracious if not most interesting accounts of the life and times of King Charles the Twelfth. From the point of view of modesty, it is also remarkable, the writer having practically effaced himself in his eagerness not to lose for posterity any fact however small, or incident however trivial, which had to do with his hero.

CHARLES THE TWELFTH KING OF SWEDEN

CHAPTER I

SWEDEN UNDER CHARLES THE ELEVENTH

I farans stund i stridens brand,
hvad mod hos denna skara!
Hurkunde arma fosterland,
du dock så ålskadt vara,
En kärlek få, så skön så stark,
af dem du närt med brőd af bark.[1]

I WAS a soldier of Charles the Twelfth. To have fought under him was to love him. And now in my old age, scarred and broken in health, I would gather together all I have of him in memory, in letters, and in my diary of the old days, and so write of my King that my children and their children might know and love him, and mayhap also cherish Sweden the more, and dream the better of the greatness that was hers. I know well that my brother-in-arms, the General Adlerfelt, has written fully of our King, and also the Doctor of Theology, and Pastor Jöran Nordberg has written full truthfully

[1] In danger's hour, in battle strife
What valor gave this band new life!
How couldst thou, poorest fatherland,
Receive a love so great, so grand,
Such love from those whom thou hadst fed
So meagrely with bark for bread!
JOH. LUDWIG RUNEBERG.

and at length of our deathless leader. Still, there is much that now leads me to grasp my quill. I feel I know him better than all others. Did I not serve his father before him? And did I not look into his face that awful moonlight night below the cliffs of Fredriksten? It is easy for me to confess that so great a theme deserves a great writer, and that there doubtless are many others who, with clearer knowledge in military matters as well as those of State, could more fittingly relate both one thing and another and tell it with more taste and fancy. The great heart of his blessed Majesty the King, his doughty actions, his even temper and nobility alike in good and ill fortune, not only astonished the whole world, but won the veneration of friends and enemies alike. Yes, so much so, that Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen, Dutchmen, and even foul and villainous Muscovites, have been more than eager to impart to the public as much knowledge as they could glean in regard to His Majesty's life. It would seem that a mere sense of propriety must show the unbecomingness of leaving the great King's name without the proper honor and commendation in Sweden and in his mother tongue. And therefore I shall busy myself not only to tell the whole exact truth, but also to purge His Majesty's memory of every malevolent and belittling vilification which thoughtless or ignorant foreigners have sought to cast upon it. I trust he will forgive me if I at times perforce see Sweden's poverty and misery wrought by the necessity of his housekeeping. Would to God his glory and her good fortune might have gone hand in hand! As I turn to my diary I rejoice that it so often was my cus-

tom, as it was that of many of my companions, to write down what the King had said during the day, where we were camping, or how we had fought. How constantly have I not seen Gyllenkrook and Klinckowström and Bjelke and Creutz thus occupied before they lay down to sleep! I am happy in that I copied so many of his letters, and that I own numerous papers of His Excellency the Highest Marshal and Prime Minister Count Piper, the Field Marshal Count Rehnsköld, as well as the Secretary of State Hermelin. They will be of great use to me to refresh my memory for my labor of love. No less valued are those of the chief interpreter Amira purchased from Constantinople, telling of much I knew not, that passed between King Charles and the Turkish Court. These are translated from Latin to Turkish or from Turkish to Latin with small marginal notes in the Italian tongue, all illuminating those strange days. So I have much that will assist me. God grant that what I write may spread the everlasting glory and honor of my late beloved Master, Charles the Twelfth, King of Sweden.

Now, before I come to the very heart of my work, my hero himself, I would show how wide-stretched the land he governed, how illustrious were his ancestors, and how noble his inheritance from parents and warriors; I would also cast a glance upon the Kingdoms of Europe as they were in my youthful days when they were the world into which the royal babe was born.

The history of Sweden has been the history of her Kings since Gustavus the First, of the Vasa line, laid strong and deep the foundations of our nation's life.

With the fall of the greedy German merchants that believed their fleets should command all the harbors and seas of the earth, Sweden could look beyond her Scandinavian quarrels. After the Hansa were surely crushed, we dared once more sail across the Baltic and by little and little advance inland from the shores — Charles the Ninth paved the way for the glorious preserver of our Protestant faith. How often has the spirit stirred within me as I have stood before his Chapel under the vaults of the Riddarholm's Church and read: —

In angustiis intravit:
Pietatem amavit:
Hostes prostravit:
Regnum dilatavit:
Suecos exaltavit:
Oppressos liberavit:
Moriens triumphavit.[1]

When Gustavus Adolphus ascended the throne in 1611, his kingdom consisted in reality of but a portion of Sweden as well as Finland. The richest southern provinces, Halland, Scania, and Blekinge all belonged to the Danish King. But see what new lands were the heritage of Christina after they brought his body home from that sad but glorious field of Lützen, and the honorable peace of Westphalia had ended that war of thirty long years! She was Queen of Sweden by glorious descent, of Esthonia and Livonia, Carelia and Ingria by

[1] He entered [upon his work] amid difficulties:
He loved piety:
He laid low the public enemy:
He enlarged the borders of his kingdom:
He made his Swedes great:
He freed the oppressed:
And even in death he was victorious.

the humbling of Muscovy and Poland, of the Island of Rügen and Usedom, the wealthy City of Stettin, the Isle of Wollin and rich portions of Pomerania by the defeat of Brandenburg, of Wismar taken from Mecklenburg, and of Bremen and Werden from the Empire. As ruler of these broad stretches of German lands she took her seat and gave her vote as a Princess of the Empire whenever grave matters disturbed the council halls of the Diet at Regensburg. Charles the Tenth, who followed her, again struck terror in the heart of Poland, wrested from Denmark the southern provinces of the Peninsula and rich Baltic Isles, and did not pause until he had made the Baltic almost a Swedish sea under the blue and yellow cross floating from the battlements of its shores. Such were the broad lands that became the patrimony of Charles the Eleventh, such the links for him to weld together into a mighty Swedish chain, — and he did so gloriously, — leaving but one tongue, one law, and one rule.

The German Emperor, who had perforce bitten deep into the sour apple when he was forced to affix his imperial eagle to the Peace of Westphalia, was now no better off, distracted as he was between western foes and the innumerable hordes of Turks and Tartars seething in unrest at his southeastern gates. His Empire, with its endless quarrelsome dogs of small and large breeds, was ever a battleground. Woe unto the Prince who is down, for his enemies fall upon him as do the hounds upon the wounded game. The much-involved political disputes in German lands went even beyond the comprehension of our own astute Bengt Oxenstjerna. Every grave mat-

ter of State, whether it pertained to Spain or Sweden, England or Hungaria, must there be brought up and settled anew.

The Empire was the great market of mercenary troops and an open field for every fight. He who would prevail in Europe must swear the loudest, march the hardest, and shoot the truest within the borders of the Holy Roman Empire, and the Protestant likes neither the sly venom of the Hapsburg nor the honey of the Jesuit. Sweden was responsible for part of it all as one of the Estates of the Realm. And thereto, since the Elector of Brandenburg had abandoned the only and true faith for Calvinism and the Elector of Saxony had foully turned Papist, the King of Sweden was as of old, in Gustavus Adolphus's days, looked up to and revered as the first lord and protector of the Lutheran faith.

Would that the Swedish statesmen had seen the danger in all this! Blind to their nearest interests, like the German Emperors of old faring south to Italy, the Scandinavian kings wasted their strength on the southern plains of Germany when they should have conspired to make a strong union between the northern kingdoms.

The power of Brandenburg was rapidly growing. Wisely had she thrown in her fortunes with the victorious armies of Charles the Tenth, and received East Prussia in reward. Soon, under his great-grandson, was she to covet the royal crown. England was mistress of the seas and need no longer fear the white sails of her Dutch rivals.

She had become the first sea power in Europe, and her new monarch, William the Third, was weighty in the

European councils, only second to him they called "le roi soleil." Now that the House of Orange, glorious in its annals, ruled on both sides of the Channel, England and the Dutch traders could plot and fight, as well as buy and sell, as one nation.

The great Polish-Lithuanian republic of nobles was misruled to an ideal extent, while France stood alone proud and politic.

The Electorate of Saxony, the only stronghold of German Protestantism, was not only one of the stoutest, best populated, and most unified States of Germany, but also most highly developed in material as well as intellectual matters. Augustus the Strong, so soon to fix the attention of all Swedish eyes, was the reigning monarch, and through the abandonment of his faith, the pawning of his lands, and the coining of false money, he was able to purchase votes sufficient to defeat every other pretender to the royal throne of Poland.

Too long did we waste our contempt and our jests upon the Muscovite barbarians, and liken their Tsar to the ferocious rulers of China and Abyssinia of whom travelers into those far regions had brought us strange accounts. The boors sent as Ministers from the Court of Moskowa, we could not feast at our tables, nor entertain in our halls, nor use for aught else but to encourage their master, like the mighty Shah of Persia, to wage war against the infidel. Despite the slyness of the Tsar, we took not seriously his political scheming; nor did any power, but Sweden, find it worth its while to waste a couple of months in sending the Ambassadors in return to the Muscovite Court.

Two momentous questions attracted the attention of all Europe. Charles the Second, the last Hapsburg King, was soon to die, leaving unoccupied the Spanish throne. The Spanish provinces must as a consequence either be divided or given to a French or Austrian prince. Charles had bequeathed the whole of the possessions of the Spanish monarchy to Philip of Anjou, the second grandson of Louis the Fourteenth. The Turkish wars must soon come to a close and the conquered provinces be divided amicably or by quarrel. Weighty interests were at stake and thunder-clouds were gathering in the East and West.

Charles the Eleventh reigned in Sweden. He was a great King, patient and inclined to quiet rule. Many a time did he impress upon me the need of our country for peace, peace at any cost except honor. He was a painstaking master-builder, though the blocks given over to him by his ancestors fitted ill together. "His eyes were privily set against the rich." His hand was hard and heavy, and loud were the murmurs of the nobles, but the course he followed was necessary for Sweden's weal. He surely saved her from the fate of France and the selfish rule of the landowners, nobles grown rich after the Thirty Years' War through constant gifts of property from the Crown. One by one he made them disgorge the enormous revenues accumulated through their great estates, however proud the family name. Well might they think it an earthquake. Money poured by lawful means into the royal coffers, and the peasants, tilling patiently the earth in the sweat of their brow, need no longer feel the terror of earlier persecutions and

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antiqua et hodierna

levies. And in how many other ways was he not most truly the father of his country? We who have fought in his and his son's armies know well how wisely they were formed from our peculiar peoples drawn from different provinces and countries. What monarch before him has left forty-five men-of-war with twenty-six hundred cannon, or a naval fortress equipped like Karlskrona? His Ministers did well to become his faithful servants whom he could consult or not as he pleased, for none of them could have counseled him better how to leave coffers well filled. See the witches he destroyed, and the piety he instilled into all, rich or poor; whether hiding in smiling valley or thick forest the sorceresses were tracked by his diligence and burned by the dozens, saving innumerable souls from the devil and the young from their pernicious example. Religion flourished once more. From the high tower of the three crowns in Stockholm holy music gladdened the people, and many a new church bell spread its joy over the countryside. I can still clearly see the day we celebrated the centenary of Upsala, meeting with candles in all church windows, as at Christmas matins, and with music and songs of praise, as of an Ascension Day evening. Even the hearts of the Huguenots that had just come to us from far-off Rochelle leapt at the sound of the sacred tones. Verily no King could do more for his country than he did. To know the necessities of his subjects, I have often seen him walk through the streets and market-places without any one's suspecting who it was until some swift act of justice was done. This he would order even to the punishing of his soldiers. Thus, one of them

had been catching slyly after nightfall the dogs in the narrow streets by the palace walls to sell their meat for that of the roebuck. The King himself put the iron collar around his neck in the market-place and ordered that a dog's head be hung upon his breast. There the rascal stood until his feet for fatigue gave way under him and he fell and choked to death. So swift and just in his judgment was Charles the Eleventh. But his justice was also tempered with mercy and true concern. Instead of swiftly punishing the thief with death, he had his Councilors decree that he should be sent to a house of discipline where he was afforded work in proportion to the villainy of his theft and might wear a crown of iron on his head surrounded by bells proclaiming, wherever he went, his crime. Ungrateful, indeed, were the supplications that reached the King praying for hanging instead of such penance.

His religion was a matter of grave moment to him in all his affairs. My first memory of him is a searching examination in it to which he subjected me the day I came to Court. I have since thought that I might have been admitted Doctor of Divinity by virtue of it, for indeed my father had drilled me well. He (I mean my father) had been all his life at the Court, as I have been since, and I cannot remember the time when I was not destined to that service. In preparation for it, from the time when I could first speak, my memory was constantly exercised in the catechism and all matters of religion. I cannot recall that any other preparation was considered necessary to it, though, of course, I was taught other things as all boys were, particularly

such history and exercise of arms as were suitable to my age.

I saw His Majesty more than once examine others who were entering his service, not only those who were to be about his person and about the Court, but even the common soldiers in his army. In inspecting a regiment, if his eye fell on a new recruit, he would as like as not command him to step forward out of the rank and put him through an examination in religion in the presence of his comrades. Nor was this an idle form, for any conspicuous failure might mean the rejection of the recruit. Nor did he ever forget, if the test were well endured, to commend or reward the recruit according to his endeavors. And I think that it was this practice which made his army the God-fearing one which was the fear and scourge of his enemies. Nay, further, if it was he who saved Sweden from drifting without rudder or sail upon the troubled sea of European politics, I think it was this steadfast religion of his which was his guide through it all, but there was practical worldly care with it too. Of money he was ever heedful, not miserly for its own sake, but enough so that his coffers were sufficiently well filled to let him disregard both French gold and French advice, which last, at least, was abundantly offered him by Count d'Avaux.

This was no small part of the strength that he left to Sweden when he was gathered to his fathers, for in fact, money was a sore need with us. More than that, he left the nation cleared of many of the sad misunderstandings with other nations which had so darkened her prospects. And when he left us, we stood a military

power in the first rank, ready to meet our coming fate. This strength and position, I for one verily believe, he won for us by standing as absolute monarch in his realm.

No more than the light shed by the sun is increased by a candle, can my poor quill add to the renown or the love borne his Queen Ulrica Eleanora, by Swedes and Danes alike. Her gentleness and charity will ever shine in the pages of Sweden's history. To speak her name was to whisper a prayer, and the blessings of the people followed her wherever she went. Truly the great preacher in likening her to a lily of Eastertide hit upon a comparison that was ever afterwards cherished in the hearts of her subjects. Wherever she trod, flowers sprang up in her footsteps. What understanding or steadfastness could be compared to hers? What obedience did she not show? Indeed she was as perfect a wife as queen. Having, when but a child, promised her hand to our gracious sovereign, never once did she allow herself to be dissuaded during the wars that raged between Sweden and Denmark. True to her plighted troth, she was at last rewarded by the hand of our Charles and the crown of the Swedes, the Goths, and the Vends. Verily, as the Psalmist says, "The kings of armies became reconciled, and he that tarried at home divided the spoil." Like the swallows returning in spring, the galleons of Niels Juel flew across Öresund bringing her here to nest among us. Almost every year she was brought to bed with a royal child, many of which, alas, were borne to the grave before her. Because she was being such an example of all Christian and royal

ULRICA ELEONORA THE ELDER, MOTHER OF CHARLES XII

From the Painting by Ovens in Gripsholm Palace

virtues, the King graciously permitted her to have the care of her children in much and many things, and he ordered her especially to implant in their hearts the piety and obedience she herself so admirably showed. Few times in her life did she give her royal spouse just cause to upbraid or reprove her. Only once do I remember King Charles turning on her publicly his royal indignation. The cries for pity from starving people were rending the air of Stockholm, and the Queen Ulrica had given her silver and her jewels: yes, even her costly silks and damasks from out of her wedding chests. But when she had no more to give, her thoughtless womanly heart caused her to appeal to the King and to counsel him. I can still hear his stern reproof, "I took you unto me to bear children, not to offer advice"; and the good Queen took the just censure in humility and understanding.

Her happiest hours were spent, without a doubt, when she, with her consort and little children, could go on a quiet excursion to some country seat or enjoy wild strawberries and milk in the park of the Humlegård.

Otherwise, all I can recollect and say of this excellent and gracious lady is that in Stockholm many a house of comfort for the miserable and destitute bears eloquent and silent testimony to her tender heart. Angels seemed through all her life, as at the death of some God-fearing persons, to be whispering and ministering to her. After my gracious Lady's health began failing, she was wont to retire to the Castle of Carlsberg, where she would mourn over the babes she had seen carried to their early graves.

There it was that red spots began to appear on her body, so that in agony of soul she begged to be carried in her chair to the altar of the palace chapel in order to confess her sins and receive the blessed peace that comes with the administration of the Holy Communion.

In the summer of the year 1693, her weary body finally succumbed, and though her dear heart was sore within her at the thought of leaving her little children, she seemed to those of us near her not unwilling to exchange this earthly dress for the spotless raiment of Heaven. After thanking her royal spouse, who was not to be comforted, for his grace and favors, and embracing her children, she received the Holy Sacrament, and in the Castle of Carlsberg, in a blessed moment, breathed her last, thirty-six years, ten months, fifteen days, and fifteen minutes old, returning unto the hands of her Saviour the soul which He had purchased with His precious blood. Her dying request was that her crown and jewels might not be buried with her, but that she might be laid to rest with neither pomp nor ceremony and her money given to the poor. This King Charles, for his honor's sake, could not well grant, but he wept at her funeral for four hours without ceasing and vowed he left in her tomb half his heart. In the city no black cloth could be found; the poor in their grief had purchased it all. This Queen of blessed memory left from her wedlock three children behind her, their royal highnesses Prince Charles, Princess Hedvig Sophia, and the Princess Ulrica Eleanora.

Before closing my description of this excellent royal couple, I would give the verse written by a poet and sent

among friends until the children had learnt it by heart, and it reads: —

Good-will among neighbors, a well-ordered house,
Were his manly care.
A lamp of all virtues his excellent spouse,
A lady so rare,
Among women well praised,
She was pious and chaste,
Kept her house without waste:
And memory fain
Will outlive these twain,
While the world remain.[1]

---

[1] Grannsämje, hemfrid och styr på sit hus
höll han som en kare
Frun, som han fick, var ett dygdens ljus
en fröken så rar;
Så from och Gudfruktig,
Så sedig och duktig
Att af dette par
Är åminnelse kvar
alla världens dar.

CHAPTER II

THE YOUNG PRINCE

THE babe whose sword was to flash lightning under European skies was born at a quarter before eight in the morning of June the seventeenth, 1682, 5631 years after the creation of the world according to the opinion of the learned Doctor Scaligeri. That a glorious but bloody reign was prophesied was easy to read from the signs and portents on earth and in the sky. At the moment of birth the little fox was setting in the west, while in the eastern firmament rose the shining star of the little King or the Lionheart. The ladies-in-waiting wiped blood off the hands of the babe, while in the palace courtyard so furious a storm was raging that the copper and tiles were thrown from the roof to the cobble-stones of the courtyard. Stupid and dull indeed would he be who from these signs could not plainly recognize the coming of a glorious but bloody reign. The consequences of his birth did thus allow us, of the Court, to suppose that extraordinary influences affected the birth. After King Charles the Eleventh's death I copied certain portions of his diary for use in this my writing, and on this selfsame glorious day I find this entry: "To-day, Saturday morning, my consort was delivered of and bore me a son. Eternal praise and glory be to God who hath helped her and may He likewise help her to her former health again for my Kingdom needs more heirs."

BIRTHRIGHT REJOICINGS

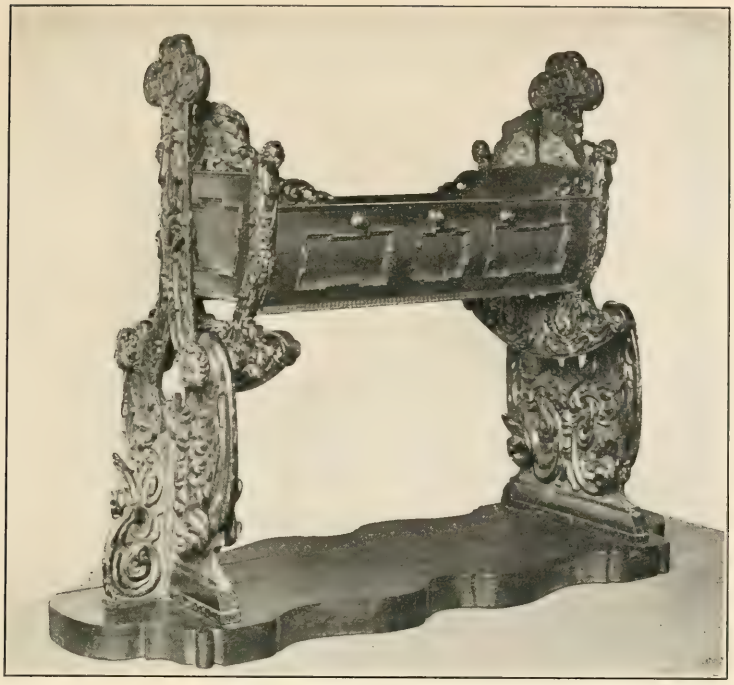
The day is one which I shall long remember, especially the evening of it. That afternoon I had ridden through the streets that lie between the palace and the market, and though my mind was then filled with the event of the day, I saw nought to make me think that the citizens had as yet taken note of it: but at nightfall, when I came off duty, I walked out from the palace to observe the rejoicing of which the sounds had already begun to reach us within. Then I saw the daytime quiet changed into a veritable riot of joy. At that time I had not yet seen service in war and knew not, so well as I know now, what the sack of a city looks like, but my first thought as I looked down toward the market was that it was as if the city were being pillaged and burned by an enemy, for in every street opening out of the market-place, people were swarming, all laden as if with pillage or as escaping with their household goods. Many were carrying fuel for the great bonfire which was already blazing in the center as high as the eaves of the houses. Others were rolling casks of red wine or white, which were speedily horsed and broached, and as speedily emptied with shouts, and singing and dancing. So was it in front of every church; and before the house of every noble stood a cask around each of which danced the crowd, circle within circle, till one was dizzy watching them, whether one had aught of the wine or not.

By and large, it was a wholesome mirth, too, for I saw few that were drunk, and few unseemly acts, though here and there a little, which I will not set down now to the disparagement of our good burghers who are as

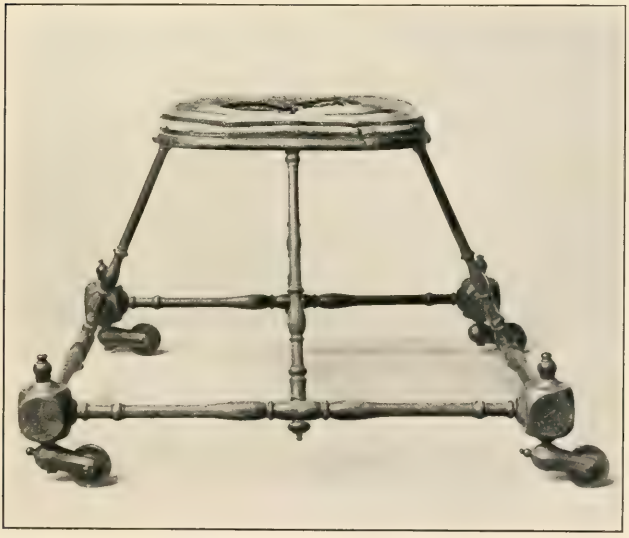
upright as any. A few quaint sights I saw which it would be sport to tell of, but I will not. And it is written that there was not a village in the realm of Sweden in which the glad occasion was not celebrated, each in its degree after the same manner by all its inhabitants who cherish virtue and love God. Cannon and guns roared as if in war, and everywhere joy fêtes were held and bonfires lighted. A new star had arisen in the north like the one seen over Bethlehem by the wise men of old.

The gentle Queen, though then fast sinking in health, was allowed to superintend the education of Prince Charles until he could walk and talk, nay, longer, as I recall, until he began to lose his first teeth. And it was while he was still under her guidance that I saw him first — indeed, there were scarce more than two years of his whole life that I was not by his side during most of his waking hours, or at least within his call. It was not many months after his second birthday that I was commanded to court as a page, I being then just turned twelve years. How it came about that I was so summoned, being nothing to the purpose, I will omit relating. Near as I had always lived to Stockholm, and in spite of my father's long service with the old King, not to mention my mother's rank and position, I had never seen the royal palace, or a royal person. I know not well what I expected to see, but I still remember my surprise to find the royal palace and household so like my father's house.

I was easily admitted, and without ceremony, to an anteroom where a comely enough young woman was sitting watching a child tumbling about on the floor.



THE CRADLE OF CHARLES XII



GO-CART IN WHICH CHARLES XII LEARNED TO WALK

She smiled at me as I entered, — I dare say I was well-looking for a stripling, — and I soon entered into converse with her. I think she soon learned all about me from my frankness, whereas I learned so little of her, beyond what I saw, that I know not to this day whether she was one of the maids-in-waiting, or a servant, but I do remember yet her wide blue eyes and smooth flaxen hair.

After a time, as none came to conduct me to the Queen, she laid a sudden command on me to watch the child, and left the room. I had been far more accustomed to dogs than to babies, and knew not what to do, for the child looked after the maid, and then at me, and I clearly saw in its face signs of a gathering storm. Without thought of what I did, I began a little clear, high whistle through my teeth, which will always make a pup cock its ear and watch as if for a rat. The child looked up attentively with its head on one side, and then smiled. In another moment, by I know not what monkey's trick, I had it laughing heartily, and so it was doing when the girl came back. "Faith," says she, "you are like to prosper here if the young Prince marks you so for his favor." And in truth, it was as she said. I was thus instantly in his good grace, the light of which was never turned from me. I know not how many times in the day, nay, and in the night too, if he were wakeful, he would call me by the baby name he then gave me, or come to me with his baby troubles. And many were his troubles, for he had from the first an eager spirit which would not be denied, and refused to be bound by the limits of his infant strength and stature. If he wanted

aught beyond his reach, were it a star or a window-ledge, he would tug a stool or chair and climb to it, reaching seemingly impossible perils from which I had hourly to ward him.

It was a patriarchal household, more like my father's than like that of a king. This I knew not at the time, for I had seen or heard naught as a boy of the loose spendthrift magnificence of Versailles, the bloody orgies of Moskowa, or the harlot-scented drawing-rooms of Dresden. Promotion was not to be had save by honest merit. I say not this save in thankfulness, for I was always a soldier and no courtier. Of the King's practical piety I have already written; his frugality and industry were no less. By the dim candle-light of five by the clock of a winter morning he would gather his secretaries about him for matutinal work, or would let saddle the horses to ride neck or naught to the mustering of some far-off regiment, we pages and guardsmen pelting after him, rolling in our saddles and half blind for the sleep which still veiled our eyes. Soldiers drill and water their horses in the courtyard, and pigeons wheel in the sunlight about the golden crowns and copper roofs of the palace towers.

The Dowager Queen Hedvig sits combing the hair of her lap-dog or places her card-table close by the bed where Queen Ulrica lies confined. The old lady still held briskly to a mind of her own, though her King, Charles the Tenth, lay rotting in his chapel. I well remember when the good Bishop Emporagius published his new catechism as a guide and light to the path of the young, wherein, in course of accompting the household

goods, he reckoned in all womenfolk including their Majesties the Queen and the Queen Dowager. When she came upon the passage she began to scream and chatter her rage to me, for none but the Prince and I were by. Next she sent me to summon this person and that, and to each in turn she read it with renewed scolding and wrath till I had heard it a round dozen of times, and could repeat it by rote to-day. It ended in her summoning the bishop from his snug study in the cathedral close, and berating him soundly while he knelt before her in gown and hood; but that I did not see. The catechism was publicly forbidden, I doubt not at her insistence, and that we thought then was to the everlasting shame of the bishop; but I wonder whether in the eternal heaven either one kneeleth now to the other.

Amid all this did Charles learn his earliest lessons of life. In due course his fourth birthday was celebrated with raisins in the bread, goats' cheese, and small beer instead of milk; thereafter he was rejoiced by the selection of a God-fearing and learned tutor. For this purpose he accompanied his grandmother to our great University town of Upsala, where doctors and professors would congregate. Three of these having been well examined as to their fitness, ranged themselves humbly and in full doctors' robes in the hall of learning, wherein the boy then entered. To one of them, the professor of eloquence, he gave his hand, and thus did Andreas Norcopensis become the most fortunate of Swedish teachers. He on mornings as well as afternoons patiently instilled the first principles of religion, of history, and of

geography into the open mind of the Prince, who, when fatigued with these, would be regaled and distracted by moral and political reflections.

He learned to speak the High German tongue of so many of his subjects, as well as Swedish, how to handle a horse, and how to hold a sword. It is no boast but sober truth for me to say I rode with him the first day that ever he bestrode a horse, and the last; and scarce a time between was he ever in the saddle that I was not in attendance. Soon he had learned to write sufficiently well to send a letter to his great-aunt, the old Queen Christina, long since turned heretic and leading a life of profligacy and guilt amid the Cardinals in Rome. She replied to him in the French tongue: —

MON CHER PRINCE: Je vous remercie de l'obligeante lettre que vous m'avez escrite, et je suis ravie d'apprendre que vous promettez beaucoup de bonheur et de gloire à la Suéde par les beaux talents que Dieu a mis en votre personne. Je souhaite qu'il vous conserve, qu'il vous fasse croître en vertu, en sagesse, et en valeur, pour vous rendre toujours plus digne du trône où vous êtes destiné, et que je puisse avoir un jour la joie de vous voir et de vous embrasser, pour vous assurer que je suis avec beaucoup de sincérité et de tendresse, mon cher neveu, votre bonne tante Christine Alexandre.[1]

ROME, le 30 *Juin*, 1588.

Sundays were for the young Prince fête days and days of special religious edification, for in the afternoons, after he had listened to the two hours' sermon, he was permitted to write out its text and argument, which he then dutifully gave his mother when he came to kneel

[1] Daughter of Gustavus Adophus, and Queen of Sweden from 1644 until she abdicated in 1654.

by her bed for his evening prayer. Nor were small rewards wanting to stimulate him in virtue and ambition. He received pieces of money from the fond mother to dispose of as he pleased, but an accounting for which he must accurately make with Norcopensis, now ennobled under the name of Nordenhjelm. Or the lad was allowed to go in the sled, harnessed with six reindeer, and follow his father to drills at Jarfva or Ulriksdal. If he needed relaxation and had been good, I would be told to fetch grandfather Charles the Tenth's diary and read it to him by the courtyard windows.

Sweden had no Latin scholar comparable to Nordenhjelm. With sonorous voice and eloquent gesture would he repeat from memory verse after verse of the old masters; and as he taught the growing lad, lose himself in Cornelius Nepos, Julius Cæsar, or in Tully and Livy. The boy, quick to learn, would thus mark the great deeds of antiquity, notice the arts of war, his duty toward his fellowmen, and take heed of the course of Roman history. I cannot call to mind the exact age at which he studied one and another of these authors, but I remember many a time when in default of any other boy to play with him I must needs join in playing at Romulus and Remus, or Horatius at the bridge, or Cæsar bridging the Rhine. For these last he would place a hurdle over the kennel of the palace court, and would storm at me for that I would not willingly fall in the water or mud when I was killed by his little sword.

Or again the silver-tongued Nordberg would, through written drills in reasoning disputations, in which teacher and pupil would both take part, endeavor to unfold the

mind. Many of these, for the great love I bore the Prince, I begged the good Nordberg to give me. And here is one from his sixth year:—

NORDBERG. Do you know, my Lord, how precious time is?

PRINCE. I know it very well.

NORDBERG. Will you then tell me for what it may be used?

PRINCE. One may use time for everything that is fine and useful.

NORDBERG. Before one may do something fine, the thing must exist; can your Highness tell me what that means?

PRINCE. I shall tell you. One must pray to God, one must know how to vanquish sorrow and sadness, listen to good counsel and salutary exhortations.

NORDBERG. Still more, if you can.

PRINCE. One must be virtuous, mild, and pious.

NORDBERG. Your Highness surely knows still something.

PRINCE. One must obey one's parents and everybody who gives one good advice.

NORDBERG. Do you add nothing more?

PRINCE. One must be as mild as a lamb, and have spirit and courage.

NORDBERG. Still more, if possible.

PRINCE. One must appear to one's enemies like a lion, but one must also at home be as gentle as a lamb.

NORDBERG. I expected in the beginning we should have but a single theme, but I find we have had several beautiful ones. Surpassing my expectations your Highness has gained your point and I concede the victory with all my heart.

Studying the French language and dancing with a French ballet-master, and accompanying his father more often on his constant rides to reviews and drills, continued as the Prince reached his teens. By the time he came to his ninth year the King felt the necessity of laying down certain canons that should govern the lad's instruction. These he and the Queen signed, and affixed

thereto the royal seal. Above all the King commanded that the Prince

should recognize how the Roman religion and the power of the Pope had forever been abolished from Sweden; in what manner the Evangelical faith had been established, and the reason why the Kings of Sweden and the hereditary Princes are obliged to promise to defend and maintain it with the last drop of their blood.

And further the King commanded that

one should utilize the Commentaries of Cæsar to furnish his Royal Highness with the model of a great and perfect captain, and that one should thoroughly inculcate in the Prince the art of self government and how to put a check to his passions.

Great teachers and masters succeeded Nordenhjelm under the father's watchful eye. Thomas Polus, a great diplomat of standing and experience; Baron Charles Stuart, teaching the lad the use of his strong body and the skillful thrust of the sword, as well as the art of fortifications and the science of mathematics; Count Lindskiöld, the cheerful poet and scholar; and Baron Gustaf Cronhjelm.

I have kept among my papers a couple of leaves from this time, written up- and down-hill in the crawling capitals of the lad. As I look at them the scenes of happy years so long since gone come back to my eyes in happy sequence, and I seem to read the spirit of the boy between the lines. I copy them word for word. The Prince when he wrote them reached scarce to my breastplate. And here they are: —

When as we should leave for Carlsberg, then mamma sent out a marshal to ask my governor if it was healthful for me to

go out for I had the snuffles. Then said the governor, "No." Then said the marshal, "Why, one could ask the doctor." When the doctors now came up and spoke with the Queen, then said the governor to me: "The doctors say to the Queen that it is not healthful for you to go out." Then I rushed in between them and neither the Queen nor the doctors understood what it might mean. Then I said: "You do not understand the doctor craft if you say I cannot go out." Then all who stood there laughed. With this we started for Carlsberg, and the Queen did not travel the way she was wont to travel, for mamma did not like to go up the big stairs but drove through the garden. Later I looked at the stud and the Queen talked with the governor about the garden. In the meanwhile I and my sisters ran around, and later we went home the same evening.

Even before he was six years old the Prince was allowed to follow us on the ice, to strap his little skates on his feet and strut in front of the regiment, "The Prince's Own," all dressed in dark blue, which his royal father had presented him as a birthday gift, and which did duty in Gothenburgh. This he writ in his diary, though I have not the entry by me, but others I have to like effect, namely: —

March the 2nd, 1692, Her Majesty my very dearest Lady Mother gave me a lovely book in which was a calendarium for the last year 1691.

Ditto I received from Her Majesty, my very dearest Lady Mother, two red-colored crystal glasses, the one to drink out of, but the other fluted was filled with water of Hungaria.

Ditto I received from Her Majesty, my very dearest Lady Mother, a knife inlaid with gold and a ring with a false ruby.

Charles had scarcely been confirmed and attended his first communion in the year 1697, before calamity plunged Sweden in sorrow and mourning. I speak of the

death of Charles the Eleventh, of the burning of Stockholm Castle, and the frightful famine that overtook the country.

Among other signal tokens of the Lord's mercy shown to the great King, God permitted him, accompanied by the six first men of the realm, a vision a few days before his death. It must have been the Almighty God's intention that Charles should be informed of what should take place in Sweden long after his death, that he might bear in mind that God turned not aside and put off this calamity to the Kingdom on account of his fear of God. It is this vision that I mean to describe as it really took place and was written down by his blessed Majesty himself, before his death, signed and sworn to by all the witnesses, and sent to the archives for safe keeping.

Thus I read: —

I, Charles the Eleventh, this day King of Sweden, had on the night of the second of April, 1699, when I was more than ordinary seized by my melancholy torments, a vision which threw me into the greatest consternation. When I awakened at half-after eleven of the clock, I became aware of a light as it had been from candles in a window of the Council Hall. Thereupon I said to the Chancellor, Bjelke, who sat in with me: "What light is that in the Council Chamber? I believe something there is on fire."

He answered: "Your Majesty, it is the moonshine as it falls on the window."

With this I was content, and turned to the wall that I might enjoy some rest; but as I was full of fears beyond measure and could find no rest, I turned myself again toward the door and was anew aware of the light: Then again I said: "This can never be lawful business."

"Oh, yes," answered the mighty and beloved Chancellor, Bjelke, "Your Majesty, it is naught else but the moon."

At the same moment there entered the Councillor Bjelke to inquire for my health. I then asked this honest man if he could discern whether there might be any dangerous fire in the Council Chamber. He paused awhile and then answered: "Praise be to God there is nothing; it is but the light of the moon which is the cause that there appeareth to be lights in the Council Chamber."

I was again content, but casting my eyes thither once more, it seemed to me as if there were people there. Then I arose, put on my nightgown and went to the window and opened it; became aware that it was full of lighted candles; then I said: "Good gentlemen, this is no lawful business. In confidence that he who feareth God need fear naught else, I will now go thither to search out what this can be."

I gave order to one of those present to go down to the guard that he should come up with the keys. When he had come, I went along with the others through a passageway above my room. When we were there, I ordered the guard to open the door, but of terror he begged that he might be spared. Then I asked Councillor Oxenstjerna, who never feared anything, to open the door. But he answered: "I have once sworn to give my blood and life for Your Majesty, but never to open this door."

Now I myself began to tremble, but summoning courage took over the keys and unlocked the door, after which I and my followers entered the room outside the Council Hall, where we became aware that it was everywhere covered with black, even to the floor. I trembled, which was not to be wondered at, and my followers were shaking even more. Then we went to the Council-Hall door to find out what was going on. Again I ordered the guard to open the door, but again he implored me to spare him. Again I ordered the others, but they too begged in mercy to be excused. Then I took the keys myself and opened the door; but when I had put one foot inside I drew it back hastily in terror and hesitated a little, but then said: "Good gentlemen, if you will follow me, we shall see what is going on: Mayhap merciful God will reveal something to us."

Trembling, they all answered: "Yes."

Then we went in. All of us were aware of a round table surrounded by reverend men, all with great books before them, and among them a king between sixteen and eighteen years old, with a crown on his head and sceptre in his hand. On his right sat a tall handsome man about forty years old. His countenance showed integrity. By his side sat an older man about sixty years old. Strange it was that when the young King shook his head several times, all these reverend men brought their hands down hard on their books. Taking my eyes away, I beheld around the table block after block, executioner on executioner, all with their sleeves drawn up, and cutting off one head after another. God is my witness, I was frightened to distraction. I looked at my slippers to see if any blood had come upon them, but saw none. Those who were executed were mostly young men. Casting my eyes away into one corner, I saw a throne nearly overturned, and by the side of it a man who looked as if he might be a regent, about forty years old.

I shook and trembled, drew over to the door, and said: "Where is the voice of the Lord I am to hear? O God, when shall these things be?"

But no answer came; only the young King shaked his head and the other reverend men beat hard on their books.

I called louder than before: "O God, shall this be in my time or when shall this betide? In thy mercy, Great God, tell me what is there to be done?"

Then the young King answered me and said: "Not in thy time shall it come to pass, but in the sixth ruler's after thee, and he shall be of such an age and bearing as am I. He who standeth here showeth that his regent shall resemble this one, and the throne shall in the protector's later years be tottering to its fall, but the guardian who in the time of his regency did persecute the young King shall thereafter espouse his cause, and they shall so establish the strength of the throne that never before shall have been nor ever after shall be so great a King as this one, and all the Swedish people shall be happy in his time. He shall come to great length of years: his kingdom shall he leave free of debt, many millions in his treasury, but before he is secure on his throne there shall be so great an

outpouring of blood that shall exceed all ever seen before in Svealand, or shall be in time to come."

When he had said this, all disappeared, and only we with our candles were left standing. We departed out, filled with unspeakable consternation, as every human being may conceive, into the black room where also all had been taken away and left in its former condition. We then went back to my room, where I seated myself to write this account. When I inquired of those who were with me whether they had heard the answer to my question, all answered: "Yes." I uttered to them: "Thank God you are not living in that time." That this is true I swear a solemn oath: So help me God in life and death.

CARL XI
This day King in Sweden.

As eye-witnesses we affirm with our solemn oath that in truth all took place as is above set forth. So help me God in life and death.

M. BJELKE
CARL BJELKE
E. BRAHE
A. OXENSTJERNA
PETTER GRANSTEN

At the time of this vision, the King was in the prime of his life at the age of forty-two, and there are writers who say that the malady which brought on his death came on him suddenly after this time; yet I know well that this is not true, and I recall clearly the day on which I first knew him to feel it, which I know to be no less than ten months before the night of the vision, a day which I fix because I noted the occurrence in my diary.

The King and a handful of us had ridden far to inspect a herd of new horses for his cavalry, which were on their way to the city coming from the northwest, for I

remember we set out past Sta. Clara and off towards the Carlsberg and beyond. The King wished to see the horses before they were prepared for his inspection. As we returned we stopped for dinner at the muster-camp of a regiment of his infantry, and there we dined with the officers of the regiment on bean soup and black pudding, pease bread, honey, and beer. Returning, we rode hard, for the King wished to get back early, there being to be a meeting of the Council. We clattered into the courtyard of the palace and threw ourselves from our saddles before our horses had fairly halted. As his feet come to the ground the King claps his hand to the right side over his belt, and clings with his other hand to the saddle, so that the horse then moving to the stable-door would have thrown him to the ground, had I not sprung forward and caught him in my arms. He gave such a groan as no one had ever heard him give before under any pain, and his face was all white, and his lip clenched between his teeth. I thought he would have fainted but he gets to his feet again and will not hear any of our anxious questionings for his health. We dismissed it at the time, saying that he had ridden hard too soon after the dinner of the crude fare which he had had at the camp; but that was no more than all of us had done and were none the worse. There were other times, too, when he complained of the pain, but I have none of them writ down. My own thought is that this was but the beginning of the mortal disease with which he took to his bed a month or so after the vision which I have related.

We were all about his bed during his illness, and what with the business of the realm which must come to him,

be he ill or well, our grief for his state, and the officiousness of priests and physicians in their anxiety for his bodily and spiritual health, he had scant peace of mind to offset his bodily illness. The hot stones which they placed upon his belly and the potions and drenches of herbs with which they dosed him were bad enough in all conscience, but when, it being Holy Week, the chaplain would preach daily there his sermon, I wonder that the King did not die earlier of all the good advice, the hard Latin, and classical quotations with which his bedroom were daily filled.

And if he had been well, I think the suffering from the famine which he would have seen, had he so much as stepped outside his palace, would have worn down his spirit like a disease; for by this time food had failed throughout the country, and thousands who were starving flocked into the city or as near to it as they could travel in search of food. Many fell by the sides of roads, but all who could stagger or creep came into the streets, where their plight was so pitiable that one would scarce dare to go abroad for the sight of them. We all did what we could to help them, but indeed we had little enough for ourselves even in the King's palace, and must needs care for our own first. After all had been done that could be done, many lay in the streets unable to find either shelter or food. Neither did the cold winter sky have pity on them, and against the walls of the houses were the corpses of the poor wretches of whom one could not say whether they had died of cold or hunger; and day by day the watch would gather up the stiff bodies in the gray of the morning.

Between his last spasms the King dwelt sadly with his physician-in-ordinary upon the state of his abdomen, praying the learned doctor, as he explained to him the intricacies of the internal walls and the windings of the intestines, that he would faithfully promise after his death, to open his body thoroughly and see what strange things were to be found in his bowels. At last the King comforted the physician-in-ordinary who was weeping as he stood helpless with all his knowledge. The court preacher raised his voice loud above the groans of his Royal Master and gave him some comforting words on the text, "Lord abide with us, for it is toward evening and the day is fast spent." Whereupon the King stretched out his hand to his beloved Master of the Horse, Gustaf Hård, and said: "Good-bye, Gustaf Hård; I thank you for every day we have spent together may God let us meet in God's Kingdom."

And then King Charles the Eleventh was gathered to his fathers.

As if the famine and the death of the King were not enough, fortune brought us within a few weeks yet another spite. The King's body still lay in state in the palace. I and a few others who were for the moment off duty sat in the guard-room about the table where we were arguing, as we so often did, I know not what question of military tactics, as to whether such and such a fortress could possibly be taken by storm or no. It was broad daylight, but of a sudden as I looked up, I, sitting with my back to the windows, saw the light on the wall before me a dusky red. It flashed foolishly into my mind that the sun was already setting, for the window was to

the west, and that I should have been on guard these three hours. I sprang to my feet and turned toward the window, but even as I was in the act to speak, I heard the call of fire and one of my comrades exclaiming, "God help us, the palace is on fire!" And indeed the flames were belching fiercely forth from nearly every window in the great Hall of Knights across the courtyard from the guard-room.

We rushed to the door and turned out the guard, ordering at the same time the alarum to be sounded by the rolling of the drums, and sent men to ring the great bell to stir out the citizens, though in truth there was little need, for most of them had seen the flames and were already coming to be of help in the courtyard. The captain of the guard took command of the mob of servants, soldiers, courtiers and all, though it was little service he had from any save the soldiers, for none others were drilled to obey his commands. These he sent in squads on this duty and that; some to form lines of men to wells and cisterns and pass buckets of water that could be thrown on the fire, and to me he gave the duty of seeing that all who were in danger were brought safely out.

In the chamber adjoining the Hall of Knights were the Queen Dowager and the princesses and many of their attendants, who were so astonished with their fear, for it seemed that the stairway was already too far gone in flames for them to descend, that when we came to them, they could do naught but run screaming like mad women from one window to another; nor would they heed us when we told them that if they came at once, they could pass the stairway in safety. There was no

time for parley or ceremony. Accordingly I picked up the Queen Dowager in my arms, but got no further with her than the door when I was obliged to call for help, for indeed she was no light weight and was nigh to strangling me with her arms about my neck, and deafening me with screaming in my ear. Others of us did the same by the princesses and some of the other ladies, whereupon the rest followed easily enough, and we brought them safely out into the courtyard, though it was but just in time for I was told that a part of the stairway fell almost before the last were off it.

By the time we came out, what with the noise of the alarum bells and the roaring of the drums and the clash of the falling beams, the senseless screaming of the excited people, and the shouted cries of the workers, the courtyard was a good vision of pandemonium itself. No one did anything toward saving either the palace or the King's goods save the soldiers and officers, who worked fast and orderly. Even the councillors seemed to lose their wits with the rest, for I saw one of them in his furred gown coming from the kitchen, his arms full of stew-pots and fry pans, and another at the window of the hall above pitching out benches, chairs, and whatever he could lay his hand to, most of which either was shattered on the stones of the court, or shattered the skulls of those below. He had not wit enough to save his own neck either, but went down into the flames when the floor fell.

But I had little time to observe all this, for my next duty was laid upon me by the Prince, who commanded me to see the body of his father borne to a place of safety

from the hall where he lay. From the moment when he came out into the court, an orderly spirit fell upon the chaos, and more was done to save the palace in five minutes then than had been done in half an hour before. We brought the body across to an unworthy resting-place in one of the stables; then, as we came out, the great bell and eight of the cannon from the battlements fell with a horrid crash through crumbling roofs and floors.

Whereupon we saw that all was doomed, and turning back to the stable, took up the King's body once more and bore it to Oxenstjerna's palace, to place it upon the great table where the King had so often held his councils and where he had issued many decrees reducing the estates of his nobles. By the time we returned there was naught left of the stately palace but the ruins. We were but just in time to see fall the very heart of it, the proud tower of the Three Crowns. From the fall thereof the people fled as from an evil omen.

CHAPTER III

THE CALL TO THE THRONE

AGAIN a child in years sat upon Sweden's throne. Shortly before the death of Charles the Eleventh, I had at his orders written the following dictation which I was instructed to deliver to the regents-to-be, in order "that they who, during the minority of the Prince, would come to rule Sweden, should hold to those alliances which the King had contracted in the best interests of the country, and always seek the welfare of his native land; that the Prince should come to understand that God, who makes and unmakes kings, would some time demand a reckoning from such men as are born to crown and sceptre, as to whether they have misused the power lent them by the Highest to their own perdition and the oppression of their subjects."

By his will the King further left the government to the old Queen Dowager, realizing full well her lofty mind, good understanding and unalterable will, and to five Royal Councillors. While the King's body still awaited burial, as the winter snows of November set in, through the trumpets of heralds and high upon the walls of Stockholm was the proclamation issued: "Without excuse or delay there should present themselves Counts, Barons, Knights, Squires, and freeholders who have remained at home."

Thereupon came all bishops and overseers, with two

decent men of the clergy from each consistory and one from each diocese and district; thereupon came all home-quartered colonels, or their lieutenant-colonels, with a captain from every regiment, who was free to come; then came also from each city a burgomaster, with a councillor or an inoffensive burgher; and lastly an honest peace-abiding man of the peasantry from every county, all likewise attired each according to his station, means, and power, with fitting robes of mourning. They came each in his fitting garb: the highborn gentlemen wearing mourning clothes with trains dragging regardless of dust and dirt, the court-ladies in white mourning garments. The corpse was carried by the Councillors, on its State bed, to the Chapel, where it was laid in a precious coffin of pure heavy tin. When the lid was closed cannons were fired from all the market-places, and sorrowfully we all wended our way to the funeral meal, with its delicious porridge of meal and blood washed down with beer and corn-brandy.

Not long did the Councillors sit in their seats of power, but great glory and honor did they and Sweden have of their rule — and this despite their endless quarrels and quibbles. In the great peace of Ryswick it was Swedish probity that bound the ties of concord and mutual understanding between the Emperor Leopold and his allies, Spain, England, and the United Provinces on one side, and King Louis on the other. No small honor I would say for our Mother Kingdom.

Less easy to meet were the covetous eyes of Denmark and Russia, or the ever-troublous question of Holstein, to which I shall come anon.

Now comes that most remarkable revolution in the state that exercised so tremendous an influence upon the destiny of Sweden and the unformed character of the Prince, that all to come was determined by it. A revolution indeed it was, little intended or dreamed of by Charles the Eleventh, and contrary in word and spirit to the laws of the country — I mean the declaring of age whereby the lad of fifteen became an all-commanding Sovereign King responsible for his actions to none on earth, but with power and authority as a Christian king to rule and govern his realm as it seemed best to him.

So strong a sword thrust in so weak a hand! And that, too, through the selfishness of the nobles, who hoped by placing the lad on the throne once more to arrive at the power and wealth of which they had been deprived.

None knew Charles, not even those who had watched his growth. Oft had he entered silently the Council Hall as the regents sat around the board, listened to their deliberations, and, if questioned, had either answered not at all, or with astounding decision and self-confidence for one of his tender years, had given opinions at variance with those of his Councillors. In general his silence but marked his strength of will. Of certain qualities they who observed him were, however, already well aware. He knew not the meaning of bodily fear, whatever the danger or however great. Like that of his father, his unbending will gave way for nothing, but like the steep rocks of his mountains shattered all that beat against it. This in truth was to him a source of great power as well as

danger. A passion for justice he also felt, and its administration without compromise. A certain domineering, if not insolent, haughtiness already marked the manner in which he received the opinions of his elders if conflicting with his own, and he remained obstinate to every entreaty of experienced reason.

Like the whelp of the greyhound, the stripling was clean of tooth and limb, muscular, gaunt, and lanky, unacquainted with bodily comforts or ease. The vices of his royal peers, Louis, Augustus, and Peter, were never to be his. The vanity of pomp and splendor, the blandishments of women, the allurements of drink, and the pleasures of delicate food, were all indifferent to him. The religious cant of our time, with its curious and various manifestations in the different Protestant lands and their dependencies, was in the boy practical Christianity, as needful to success in life as the very breath he drew. In the thin well-marked nose, the wiry hair flowing back from the high clear forehead, the firm-set jaw and flashing sapphire eyes, there was a calm resolution and unbending determination that brooked no resistance. His was an eager, forward face like the prow of a ship, and the short hair in locks like pointed flames. If ever man was born a king, it was this last scion of the line. He could but command, and others were to obey. Small wonder none found it too hard to die following that brave captain, for we would ever be behind, and Charles, man or boy, the foremost in the fight.

And here would I mention, though I shall oft return to the theme, the idolatry with which he was worshiped by the armies he afterwards led. Few mortals have been

blessed with that divine gift of leadership which was to be his, or have had the sorcery which springs from such a mixture of different personal qualities, and which inspires in followers a love and devotion drowning all meaner faculties. Even when they were bloody, spent, and gashed, home and friends, pain and fear, were all forgotten by them in their campaigns. Dying as the game was at bay, they turned their glazing eyes to him, happy and triumphant in a last look from the Master who had called them on. Though they were destitute and starving, too weak to stand, again and again their swords leaped from their scabbards and they sprang to new effort at the magic of his call.

My children and grandchildren, it was Sweden's greatest son, hallow him in your memories! As long as Sweden breeds such men in his image, She shall not perish but have the glories of everlasting life. Vanity in dress or manners he knew not, but that of spirit knew in him no bounds. And his regents had further marked how he had inherited from his father a love for long hard rides and for early and continuous work, coupled with a love and understanding of art inherited from his mother and grandmother. He no more doubted his divine right than did he the pity as well as wrath of the everlasting God.

Had not parents and tutors and regents so early left his side it might all have been different in Sweden; the future of his great qualities and strong will might have been led in different channels. Yet 'twas but a child in years longing to reach man's estate.

Yes, I have known several noble young women of his

youthful age bring forth well-formed shapely children, but man's mind and character do not ripen or develop so soon, nor does he so early produce such mental fruit.

With this remarkable year of 1698 Swede-land stood at the parting of the ways — a new era was dawning. Great events were happening and Sweden's position was indeed fortunate. It was a year of many alliances; powers far mightier than Sweden, strangely enough, paying her their court. The Emperor, England, France, Holland, Denmark, and Brandenburg all sent their ambassadors to sign favorable treaties. The eyes of Europe were directed with admiration, but still more with jealousy, toward our little Sweden; we must choose our career, either with the maritime powers, clung to so tenaciously by the wise Oxenstjerna, or with France, as had been advocated by the great number of the regents.

It is now so changed I scarce would know it — the pleasures of all, both at the Court and among the people, were simple and of a practical turn. A wedding or a christening, a church service, a review or a sleighing party, a public recantation of Jews or Papists caught in their religious idolatrous practices — these were the eventful occurrences of our everyday life. The life in the King's capital was one of small burgher interests, of quiet and decency and orderliness — the rare fêtes being hailed as the great and only events breaking the tedium and humdrum of everyday existence. When the long-anticipated royal birthday arrived, some Saint's day, or church festival, or jubilee, there appeared rich and poor, young and old; all left their trades and booths and

several callings and flocked to the great squares and thoroughfares to be children once more. Thousands of caps were thrown high in the air, the clapping of hands and loud huzzas were to be heard far down the bay and along the shores of the islands and inlets. High up to the skies burst the rockets, falling down in crimson light. They crackled with the joy of the yule-logs, and sputtered and gleamed as the celestial fires of fairyland. Amid it all, above the processions of gorgeously robed nobles and caparisoned horses, shone the illuminated C's of the King and crowns of Sweden.

But splendid garb and equipment of the nobles no longer contrasted so strongly with the poverty of the humble folks in the streets of Stockholm, for the "reduction" had closed many an ancient noble house, and many a stately palace stood neglected and deserted. If Stockholm as well as "The King's Copenhagen" could have imitated the capital of Louis XIV, they would have liked it well, but that was out of the question. Still there were palaces which could measure themselves with those of Paris in splendor, as well as in the depth of the mire in the lanes and alleyways surrounding them, where the night-watch was sorely tried in making brawlers seek their homes and sleep. In the city itself were fine rows of stone houses, four, even five, stories high, but all around them, up and down the streets to the water, clustered the little unpainted wooden houses with their thatched roofs.

The great squares made the foreigner exclaim, full of wonder and admiration, for here the roofs were of copper and iron and tiles, and here stood the fine churches and

palaces that had arisen before and during the days of my youth. There was the house of the Nobles, whose great hall was hung around with their shields; the palace of the Wrangels, where the royal family took refuge after the horrible fire; and the palace of Gustavus Adolphus's great soldier, Lennart Torstenson. In the old palace of Axel Lilje, by Normalms Square, "Batting-Baner" had just finished his irregular life and orgies; facing it stood Jacob de la Gardie's palace, "Matchless," where his son the great chancellor had lived in such elegance that crowds in the streets had to be driven by the pikes of the guardsmen from staring through the iron fencing of the courtyard. What luscious pears and apples were to be found in the royal garden behind it! And then there were the houses of Gustaf Bonde and the Königsmarck and the Oxenstjernas; and many another, built around the three sides of a court with lovely formal French gardens — palaces and gardens copied from the refined taste of foreign lands. Above it all the old palace was, under Tessin's magic touch, beginning to recover from its frightful nightmare.

It was in November and December, 1698, that the Riksdag was to meet for important action, and we were to crown Charles King and Lord. The ever-selfish and calculating nobles, trusting to the lad's indifference and inexperience in weighty matters of state, as well as to his gratitude to them for their action, decided to overthrow the State and Constitution, and, whatever clergy, burghers, and peasants might say, declare Charles of age and crown him Sweden's King. There was to be a sad awakening, and a cast from the frying-pan into the fire.

I know full well that this was in Charles's mind before the event, let them say what they will to the contrary. For it was even while the men of the Riksdag were beginning to come into Stockholm for the convocation that I was riding on a day with the Prince — I call not to mind at this writing whether it was for hunting or aught else. We had ridden hard and were chilled with the cold of the winter day, and for that we stopped at a wayside tavern far from the city. We were alone together and had naught in our dress to distinguish us, so that in the tap-room of the tavern we were not known for what we were. And as we sat there with our drink before us that we had called for to warm us from our ride, our talk fell on this and that, and at last on the convocation that was about to be.

The Prince asked me if I had heard aught of its purpose.

"Aye," said I, "I have heard it, as who has not, that they mean to set aside the law of the land and the will of your father and to make you king."

"And what say they," says he, "as to their purpose?"

"Why," says I, "that is plain enough too. There are none in the streets who know it not as well as I, and I doubt not Your Majesty knows no less."

"Well," says he, "come then, and what is it?"

"No less," says I, "than this, that Your Majesty being yet a child, there are those in high places in the state who would rule our land as they will behind Your Majesty's back."

I spoke thus plainly enough with him, as I had ever

spoken since his earliest childhood, and never did he take things from me otherwise than as they were meant.

"And what think you," says he, "of their plans?"

"Nay," says I, "I believe they think it a good one; but one thing they reckon not on."

"And what," says he, "might that be?"

"Why," says I, "I think they know not Your Majesty so well as I know you."

"You mean," says he, "that if you were in my place, you would thwart their plan by refusing to accept the crown?"

"No," says I, "you know me better. If I were in Your Majesty's place —" And there I stopped.

"Why," says he, "fear not, go on. If thou wert prince, what wouldst thou do should they offer thee the crown?"

"If I were prince," says I, "and they offered me the crown, I should take it, and I should see that no man stood behind the throne to be a power there."

"I believe you would," says he, "with all my heart."

And with that the talk shifted to other things, and what he said then I have told no man, nor whispered or written any hint of it until this moment. And it may be that some will think, who read these words, that I gave him ill counsel, even as his mother or his nurse-maid might have thought, had they seen me when I allowed him to walk the high window-ledge in the palace on the day of which I have told. And I write this here, not as boasting that I shaped the King's policy or advised him to that which he did, for I have faith that all was shaped in his mind before he hinted aught of it to me. But I will

boast, if boast it be, that I knew then more of what was in his mind than those who declared later that they knew it all.

Stockholm swarmed with the men of the Riksdag, assembled from all parts of the kingdom, not only for its convocation, but also to bury the poor King whose corpse prior to being laid to rest had made such strange and violent peregrinations.

The nobles, who met first and alone, soon agreed that the young King had already reached so apparent and beautiful a growth, and had been blessed moreover by Almighty God with such gifts of the mind and spirit, as made it to the advantage of the State for him to assume its government. To this the Councillors and the regents said Amen! These latter highest dignitaries, supported by the Queen Dowager, — every one of them expecting to pull his own chestnuts from the fire, — thereupon with solemn dignity and concern, filed into the King's cabinet, in order to lay this great matter before him before referring it to the estates for vote.

Bengt Oxenstjerna, now for many years Sweden's foremost statesman, fell upon his knees and as spokesman urged that no greater good fortune could befall Sweden than that the King should declare his willingness to ascend the throne in authority as well as in name. To this the King agreed, whereupon the nobles called the other estates to their hall.

The clergy who, in faith, were better fitted to busy themselves with their translation of the Bible, demurred and questioned. The burghers and peasants were scarcely listened to. The Marshal Gripenhjelm extolled the great

virtues of the Prince, urging that at the opening of the Riksdag they had all observed how like he was unto an angel, so that all hearts were moved and all must therefore now desire to see him as soon as possible the ruling lord on the throne of his ancestors.

The King's tutor, Gustav Ehrenhjelm, who had the audacity to insist that he was the only person present who really knew him intimately, desired more careful consideration in the matter. "If you say another word, I shall throw you out of the window," spoke bravely Axel Lewenhaupt. "*Vivat Carolus Rex!*" cried the nobles: "*Vivat Carolus!*" cried the others. Up in the air went hats, out flashed swords, and the hall rang with the happy shouts. But there were those wiseacres who shook their heads gravely afterwards and said the whole proceeding more befitted a Polish election than the proceedings of a country where the forms of law and order were supposed to be observed.

Nevertheless, now was no time to hang back. This was the hour for action. Each taking his place in the procession as determined for him here on earth by the Most High, the estates marched to the King. The Marshal of the Realm then spoke as follows: —

> Your Majesty, the realm has never fared better than when ruled by sovereigns and kings by right of inheritance. Then God has greatly blessed both King and country. For this reason and as we plainly see, Your Majesty, gifted and blessed, mild, just and ripe in years, filled with all royal virtues and understanding and ready to take over alone the government of your inherited kingdom, therefore we cannot contain our longing to see Your Majesty take upon your shoulders the heavy burden of a ruler. We therefore present our prayer to

this effect and humbly promise you our fealty, obedience, service, and duty, and promise that in your cause we shall never be sparing of life or property or blood, but will for all times subject ourselves to your gracious rule and will.

The royal lad was standing, as was his wont, according to the courteous French fashion, with his three-cornered hat under his left arm, and the right hand firmly gripping the handle of his very long sword. His face lit up as he took the marshal's hand in his and replied that, though it were a great burden, he would because of the prayers of the estates take upon him the government in the name of Jesus Christ.

Then the old King was buried and the meeting of the estates concluded. A new page was to be turned in the history of Sweden — and a page destined to be its bloodiest as well as its most glorious.

CHAPTER IV

THE YOUNG KING

CHARLES had hardly mounted the throne when his iron will began to make itself felt. Instead of making concessions to the nobles, heavier exactions were imposed upon them. To keep them well in place, he elevated Carl Piper to the nobility and placed him beside him as his chief counsellor and guide. In the hours of trial as well as of triumph, were master and servant to stand side by side. Though sorely tried, often well-nigh to distraction and despair, Piper never failed in that highest duty of a subject. Though of burgher descent and equipped with faculties scarce above mediocrity, he still possessed a keen insight into human nature, and a craving and power for work almost matching that of His Majesty. He was ever accurately informed of the smallest details of affairs. Not until the battlefield of Poltava were they to part, nor Piper to cease his endless work and endeavors on behalf of his country until, old and broken, he sent his last loving messages from behind the walls of his Russian prison.

Two days before the ceremony, the heralds announced to the sound of trumpets and timbals the time and the place where the estates must again assemble to take the oath of allegiance. The wind from the Baltic wound the snow in ice-cold blankets around them as they, on

the 13th of December, on the Riddarholm Island, knelt and swore fidelity.

I have said that it was plain to me what was in Charles's mind even before the crown was offered him. It was before the coronation, or rather perhaps at the time of it, that the nobles who had offered him the crown might well have seen it as clearly as I, not only from the omens that befell in the ceremony of the coronation itself, but in the very acts of the Prince. On the day before the coronation the storm broke in the palace and spread like a whirlwind through the whole city. Charles refused to be crowned; he declared that he was King by the right of God, and if he were so, what right had even the Archbishop to place the crown on his head? Anointed would he be, even as were the kings of the Bible. Like them he would be one of the Lord's anointed, but not one crowned by the hand of man. The Councillors and the Queen Dowager were in despair. In fact, the Queen Dowager forgot herself completely, even unto cursing, and swearing that if the boy would not be crowned as had been all kings before him, wild horses should not drag her within the portals of the church. But for this Charles remained unmoved. "The lack of Your Majesty's presence might be unpleasant to us," said he, "but for your sake we cannot change our mind."

And so the great day arrived and the procession started through densely crowded streets for the church of St. Nicholas. Charles rode a splendid chestnut horse shod with solid silver. We, who for the day were the guard of his body, officers chosen from the army and the

household, rode immediately behind him in column of fours. I was on the left of the front rank, my stirrup often touching the halberds of the soldiers who kept the way open for us through the crowd. On my right rode a captain of dragoons, whose name now I cannot call to mind, but it was he who fell fighting gallantly in the centre at Poltava. He leaned forward to me and whispered with a wink, "And a little child shall lead us," meaning, of course, that he should lead only as he was directed from behind the throne.

"Aye," said I, "but know ye so well how and where he will lead you?"

Others were not so sure, for though outwardly signs of joy were not lacking, still in all faces was more of apprehension. Something of great and sinister importance was toward, and not the joyful pealing of the church bells could dispel the anxious foreboding.

The senators and nobles, who had been since eight of the clock that morn waiting in the great crowd before the palace, were dressed all in black and without their capes. Around the church and the cemetery were posted three battalions of foot-guards from whom to the palace soldiers in double file, with halberds, kept open way for the procession. In the square of the Riddarholm were the city train-bands drawn up, on prancing horses, but whether prancing for joy or because little used to military discipline I would not say. As we passed, small coins were scattered to the populace; the ministers received larger ones of silver and gold. The King rode with his sceptre in his left hand and the reins of his charger in his right.

Now I for one hold little by omens, for I think that the good God, when He wishes to show us his will, can do so better than by the silly tokens to which many thoughtless people attach such weight; and I think that at this time the future was plain to read without such help by any who had eyes in his head. None the less on this day things befell which might have made it clear to any, howsoever blind he may have been to the nature of the King and what was in his mind.

The King came from the palace, not with the scarlet mantle lined with carmine, but all in black save for his purple cape. When mounting his charger, he, perforce, threw back his head. To the horror of all who saw, and many there were, the crown slipped and fell to the ground. To that omen none were blind; many were moved even to sobs and tears; but for the most part these were stifled and the silence was like that of the grave. In the procession to the church the Councillors, who of old were honored, were not even mounted, but went on foot, humbly carrying the canopy over the King. And this was not an oversight of the marshal or a subordinate, but the King's will and his order.

At the entrance of the church the bishop received him with the glad words, "Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord"; but within was no gladness. Against the sombre black walls shone the red damask hangings of the choir, the red velvet of the boxes and the galleries, and the huge crimson cloths, which indeed extended to the pavement around the churchyard. Solemn silence there was through it all, but most oppressive when Charles refused to take the oath sworn by Swedish

kings since time immemorial. Then indeed did the noble assembly, so many of whom had played for power of their own with the boy King on the throne, look stiffly and grimly into space, for neither by law nor by promise of his was Sweden's King to be bound. But even more than this, there befell what was to many, especially those of the clergy, the most fearful omen of all. As we were leaving the church, the horn containing the sacred oil slipped from the hands of the bishop even as the crown had fallen on the paving stone.

Such was the crowning of Charles the Twelfth, and such were the omens thereof. But when the solemn ceremony was over, the omens, too, seemed readily forgotten. The people along the streets fought and scrambled merrily for the coins we scattered among them; and in feasting and drinking showed even more freedom and license with the kegs of beer and wine, and the oxen of the anointment, than I had seen in the rejoicings at the time of his birth. The lucky peasants, those who had come representing the estates, were given for partition the cloths that had been spread over the pavement, sadly cut and trampled to be sure by the hoofs of the horses against the cobble-stones along the way of the procession. The nobles and other fortunate ones ate at the royal feast in the palace.

There followed, alas! but two short years, in which King Charles might enjoy his youth, and his country the calm of peace. Not that this period was not filled for him with grave concern and anxious care, and many a wise and thoughtful provision for his country; but youth had to frolic and riot, as is its wont.

DISAPPOINTED ASPIRANTS

Europe had for some time been much concerned to provide proper alliances for both Charles and his elder sister. During the awful winter, so severe I still can recall it like some long nightmare, sapping the strength from the waking hours to come; during this winter, one anxious mother followed upon another, and successive ambassadors whispered flattering words and eager solicitations intended to reach the royal ears. First of all to arrive, at Yuletide, through the deep snowdrifts, was the widowed Duchess of Holstein; her royal sled with its sixteen horses had to be abandoned on the roadside and exchanged for the light honest harness of a peasant. With her came the expectant daughter, Mary Elizabeth. She was a sorry wench and four years older than the King. He slighted her by giving no New Year's present, laughed at her fat lips and slobbering mouth, and replied to his despairing grandmother that "The lady smelt full foul and looked but little better." In this the people heartily agreed, for the name of Holstein pleased them not.

Scarce a week later came poor Juel from Denmark, ploughing his way less successfully through the same storm. But he had so often upset in the snow that the rheumatic pains sent him to bed instead of to court. To look over the wares Juel had to offer, Klinckowström, the favorite page, had been sent to Denmark, sooth to say, not by the indifferent Charles, but by other interested parties. Back he came with a portrait of a princess of such rare beauty that she would have lighted the flame of passion in a marble statue. But not so with the King. Medical powders and exciting potions were even

administered him by the physician-in-ordinary, but all in vain.

And so came also the poor old Duchess of Bevern, and the widowed Duchess of Mecklenburg-Gabow, with her daughter, later more fortunate with the first King of Prussia; and an offer from the courts of Brandenburg and Würtemberg. When the last one arrived, in February, the boy, who loathed the whole idea, asked the tardy princess if she could not see that there were more than enough to choose from without her?

Would there had been as happy a choice, or lack of choice, with the Princess Hedvig Sophia, and Sweden had thus kept out of the fatal embroilment she was about to enter, and from the cause she was, alas! to champion. But this was not to be. The young Duke Fredrik of Holstein having found favor in her eyes, and the choice, after lengthy discussion and wrangling, at last having been approved by the regents, during the minority of Charles, the betrothal was publicly announced, the duke was received by the entire population of Stockholm and all the cannons fired, and the wedding solemnized at the palace of Carlsberg; after which Charles not only escorted the newly married couple to the coast, but with his men-of-war, far out to sea, as they spread their white sails towards the ill-starred coasts of Schleswig-Holstein.

It was a turning point in Europe's history, this wedding of which I speak, that of Fredrik, of Holstein, to our Princess, Charles's elder sister, Hedvig Sophia. And I should have said that it was solemnized by the archbishop at Carlsberg, at the palace, early in the sum-

CHARLES XII AND HIS SISTERS (1696)

From the Painting by Ehrenstrahl in Gripsholm Palace

mer of 1698. It was a time of deep anxiety to me, not only that I, together with all who took thought for it, were sore in mind over the entanglement of our power with the dangerous policies of the Duchy, but for that Charles himself seemed to take no thought for it. Neither I, nor anyone else to the best knowledge I have, could win one word from him as to the effect of this marriage on our realm. Instead he concerned himself with Adam Cark who should discourse on his viol the sweetest of music at the door of the royal couple's bridal chamber. And once, when I sought to know his mind on matters politic, he darted away to give orders that each page should receive a plate of sweets from the royal board after the wedding feast. And I must confess here that I know not to this day whether he knew the import of it all or not. From the wild gaiety of his demeanor, of which I shall write in due course, I might well think he heeded nothing. I cannot think that he foresaw nothing, for I do not believe his nature was changed.

The die had been cast. The discussion had been long and angry among the regents then ruling Sweden. In the future the Princess must, come what might, espouse the cause of the Duchy, thus entering the most dangerous of battlegrounds. The questions which were to follow were not merely to prove of local interest to those abutting the shores of the Baltic, but were in verity to prove a far-reaching upheaval in the system of European government. Under the cloak of a guarantor of the Peace of Altona, but really guided by his personal sympathies, Charles had made the cause of the Duchy of Holstein that of Sweden. The King of Denmark, for

his own protection and honor, sought Saxony and Russia, listened to the honeyed words of Patkul, and curried favor with those German states whose interests were opposed to Sweden. And so the fire had been kindled in this quarter.

It was near the end of the fifteenth century that the good Emperor, in his imperial town of Rothenberg, had invested King Christian of Denmark with the sovereignty of the duchies. After that — and mark you how often discord hath issued from such cause — the trouble took rise from the partition of the heritage between the brothers, sons of the Queen. And so followed continuous struggles between the kings of Denmark and the dukes of Schleswig-Holstein, one claiming the suzerainty the other would not yield. Charles the Tenth of Sweden, marrying a Holstein princess, now the old Queen Dowager, not only filled the then reigning duke with the courage of a lion, but through the success of Sweden forced Denmark to renounce all pretensions. With the death of Charles the Tenth, Denmark again held the mastery, only to lose the coveted vassal by the Peace of Altona, under our King Charles XI, in the year 1689. Finally, with the death of Charles XI, our Charles, but a boy, and the Councillors and people (all, in fact, but the old Dowager) indifferent to Holstein and fearful of the everlasting imbroglio, Denmark was allowed to cast covetous eyes southward. Alas for the marriage of Duke Fredrik with our Princess! for now we knew full well the chase was on again, and Sweden once more in the running; a participant in the unending fray and bitter fight. But the storm was not yet to

break, though couriers and dispatches from our foreign ambassadors showed some of us plainly that the first black clouds were already scurrying across the horizon.

You cannot keep the whelp from capers or the young cock from strutting, and even so our young King was to have a short time of boisterous living. Like unto his father, he wished nothing better than a good horse between his legs. Even de la Motraye confessed that he had never seen so fine a horseman. These were rides, indeed. Cousin Klinckowström and I, who had mares and wind, followed him abreast upon the longest and wildest of them. By the first light of dawn, there was shouting and hallooing in the stables and the ring of horseshoes in the courtyard. Then away we went, neck or nothing, over the hurdles and deep ditches.

I mind one such time when we clattered out in the gray dawn of a March morning with the wind fair blowing the sky about our ears. There was a young English baronet, — Sir George Somers, I think, or Sayward, or some such name, — and I, and four or five others besides the King. We went thundering across the Söderström Bridge, where Sir George lost his hat, a fine one with gold lace, which we left bobbing among the white caps of the Mälaren. We turned westward along the waterside instead of making up the hill toward the windmills as we often did when we rode that way. So ere long we came to an end of our road, where the cliff comes straight down into the deep water; and there we drew rein, and drew breath too, and our horses were fair gasping.

"So then," says Sir George, "a fast ride and a merry one. But here we turn back or else make our choice between the devil and the deep sea."

"A fair choice," says the King; "I turn not back; which shall it be?"

"Let Your Majesty make the first choice," says Sir George with a low bow.

"Let old Brand Klipparen choose for himself," says the King. Wherewith he flung his rein on the horse's neck and at the same instant struck his spurs into the poor brute's flanks so deep and sudden that he sprang straight for the sheer rock before he knew.

My heart was in my mouth, for I saw no issue but death for the King. The horse went up only so far as his spring took him, hung scrambling an instant, then fairly toppled backward and came down with a crash amid a slide of loose rock. The thing befell before any of us could get out of our saddles, or do aught to prevent it, or even see, for the cloud of dust, what had happened; but by some miracle, or some feat of dexterity, the King threw himself clear of the horse and remained unscathed. Nor was aught injured but the saddle, which the King ordered stripped off and tossed into the water; and he rode without it.

"Neither the devil nor the deep sea will have me," says the King, "so I will e'en stay on this earth, and I think I have my work to do on it."

Now there were those who thought that the King was drunken with wine when he did such things as this, and others of which I may tell. But they who say so know not the man. What need had he of wine, whose

spirit was uplift with youth and power? How should the arrow turn back, when drawn to the head? For the nonce it flew at random, but ere long it was to find noble quarry.

Nor scarce better was our frame of mind at the bear-hunts, where the young King would constantly press in front of his hunters, with naught but his wooden fork in his hand. The fetid breath of the ugly beast advancing upon his hind legs would fairly strike the King's nostrils before he, with the strong muscles of his lithe body, would thrust forward the pitchfork on each side of the hairy neck. Backwards the beast would roll, and nimbly would the hunters bind his kicking legs. Then at eventide we would snip off the fat paws, and the King would send them for pickling to his favorite sister.[1]

Not always would it be but jest, for at times a good peasant, too slow in the turning, would have an arm or a leg torn off before the beast was beaten. If at times he were mild and tractable in his behavior, or young and anxious of learning, we would lead him home, tied and a-jumping or dragging on his fat buttocks after our horses, and his hind parts would be a clot of blood instead of hairy when we reached the castle. Then in the

[1] *March* 5th, 1700.

SERENEST PRINCESS:

MOST HONORED AND BELOVED SISTER!

I have nothing much to relate to my dear sister from here, except that we go bear-hunting, eat, drink, and sleep well, and make merry and forget at no meal to *eat* in our thoughts my Sister's and the Queen's health, since you are so gracious as to drink our health.

The bear's paws we are sending to Stockholm, if my Sister will be pleased to eat our health therein, at the same time as we drink her health here, until we again can wait upon her.

CAROLUS.

evening by the fireside we would derive much amusement from the beast over our cups. Even now I recall one brown fellow who in his unmannerly hunger had devoured the whole pastrycook's pyramid upon the royal table. King Charles thereupon commanded young Kagg to fetch up a fresh can of Spanish wine from the cellar, to give the fellow something with which to wash the sweetmeat down. Through a funnel we poured it merrily, the beast gurgling contentment. Alas, he became so drunken that he fell in his reeling through the glazing of the window into the courtyard below, and, though the surgeons employed their best skill, the broken back could not be mended and the beast expired.

At other times would we catch wolves and foxes, the King discarding the newer fire weapons so as not to obtain too unfair an advantage over the game; or we would set up gallows in which we hung living geese, heads downward and smeared with fat, so they were very troublesome to hold fast. Then we let peasants and swains gallop through the gallows and attempt in the hurry to grasp the goose and pull its head off. And a silver ducat was the reward of the winner. If it was a pretty wench, who had tucked up her red petticoats to bestride the horse, who was successful, she would receive two ducats out of the King's own royal hand.

The best games of all were those of war — costing often a life or two, but surely as instructive as amusing to us of the Court. We threw bombs made of cardboard instead of iron, and tore the clothes off each other, breaking knuckles and noses with an occasional arm or leg in storming snow bastions and fortresses. At times

the King would also devise naval battles of a curious character. He would equip boats on the Mälar Sea with the fire hose of the city, and the crew with hand pumps. With the use of these weapons the various crews would attempt to board and capture the vessels of their adversaries. Once upon such a time good Arvid Horn took off all but his shirt and rowed in a little yawl out to the King's boat and began to squirt on its crew. They answered in so spirited a manner that the little yawl filled and capsized. Horn jumped overboard and began to swim away. Charles, watching him, asked, "Is it difficult to swim?" "No," says Horn, "if you are not afraid." Hardly had Charles heard these words than he jumped, splash! into the lake. Despite all his courage, he would have drowned had not Horn grabbed him by the belt and dragged him rapidly ashore. Then swimming as fast as his strong arms would serve him, Horn struck out for a nearby island from which he protested against returning, crying out to the King he could not as he was a deserter to the camp of the enemy.

Thus it may be seen that Charles was still full of boyish pranks, though some were of the dangers of manhood. With youthful deviltry, he would spit out his cherry stones into the eyes of his page, or slyly blow them across the table into the face of poor old Count Johan Stenbock; or another time, as young Kagg was about to serve the roasted pigs' feet, cleverly upset the dish before it was handed him. When the pages became more adroit from the lessons of the old dancing-master, Ducroi, they and the dwarfs would be commanded to dance while the King roared and beat time upon the

table boards and washed his bread and butter and fried pork down with small beer. The court-chamberlain, Fequer, was at times sore tried. Once, when he was about to cut the kidneys from the roasted veal to serve the old Queen Dowager, who was clamoring for them, the cuff of his sleeve became caught in the steak. Upon the King's order, Lieutenant Wrangel at once cut off both the greasy cuffs of the chamberlain.

But the sallies of youth were not always innocent or harmless. The Duke of Holstein proved an evil brother, leading our King astray and egging him on to every mischief; some said with purpose, trusting that some day the game might go so; for our gallant King, always first in every reckless prank, might break his neck, and Sweden thus see a Holstein duke upon her throne.

One day the duke showed the King a sword with which he swore he had beheaded a calf in a single stroke. This naturally roused the King's envy. In the afternoon he had brought to the palace courtyard a flock of sheep, goats, and calves, in order that he and the duke might derive pleasure and practice in decapitation. The practice took place in the King's own chamber, whereupon the heads were thrown down upon the good, albeit astonished, citizens as they passed below the palace walls. They objected, however, when the King and duke with their household officers, with nothing but their shirts on, came galloping through Stockholm's streets, naked swords in their hands, shrieking and breaking all the window-panes which they could reach in passing; and the following day, being a Holy Sunday, they broke up the benches in the Palace Chapel, so that

the entire congregation were forced to stand throughout the lengthy service.

Tales of what went on within the palace walls became the talk of the scandalized burghers, and many a thoughtful man shook his head as he thought of Sweden's future. One had seen every glass swept off the table by the swords of the King and duke; another, all the chairs thrown out of the window; while a third had seen them on horseback sliding across the polished parquetry of the floor, shooting frightened hares set scurrying along the edges of the great Hall of Knights. To cap it all, King Charles made Duke Fredrik generalissimo over all the Swedish cavalry and infantry regiments.

And now would I also tell of the Court, and say that, after Versailles, that of Sweden soon became the most magnificent court in all of Europe. Away flew the precious ducats, with such rigor extracted from the nobles and scrupulously stored by Charles the Eleventh. Friendship, services, and poverty all received rich and constant donations. Bag upon bag of gold went to pay for the rebuilding of the palace, and the laying out of the gardens, as well as the magnificent fêtes and entertainments, until the great coffers of the Elephant Tower were almost emptied. And the half million dollars of silver coin, and hoards of jewels laboriously gathered by Charles XI, had all been spent.

A troupe of actors were brought from Paris after Tessin had received orders to bring to our court the best that could be procured in all Europe. Twice a week they played for us at court, and once, in their simpler costumes, for the rabble in the ball-house.

Greatly did I enjoy the fêtes which were most ingeniously devised by the skill and forethought of Tessin. The halls were hung with tapestries from the looms of the French Gobelins as well as from the rich city of Brussels in the Lowlands, and furthermore decorated with damask, gold and Italian mirrors. As many as eight hundred of us nobles and guests and fine and high-born people came in masks, the King himself as a boatman; the Princess Ulrica as a Dutch woman; while the Prince of Wolfenbüttel came as a Muscovite, and droll Axel Sparre as an old market-woman with a great basket filled with cherries. Indeed, they roused much merriment with many a side-splitting jest. After a prologue, with music, song, and decent dancing, showing how the Gods of Olympus were awakened during the happy and peaceful reign of Charles the Twelfth, the King's French troupe played Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, whereupon Pomona, surrounded by nymphs and fauns, invited everyone in an aria to the table. Here the feasting began with refreshments served by bacchantes and satyrs, while drinking songs were given by the King's first male and female singers. After the supper, the real ballet began, while dancing continued until the sun once more rose in the sky.

Indeed, it was a most pleasant masque. Since the days of Queen Christina such revelries had not been seen. Likewise the sixty-third birthday of the Queen Dowager, Hedvig Eleanora, was celebrated with wonderful fêtes. All night the gardens were illumined, no less than three masques were held, costing each well-nigh forty thousand dollars, and of so magnificent a

nature that even the Court of Louis was envious of Sweden.

In the midst of all this wild behavior and extravagance, Charles had not forgotten his kingly duties, large and small. Up early in the morning, he would, after reading his Bible, give grave consideration to many important matters of state. New and wise laws, the protection of religion, the industries and shipping, help for the starving provinces — to all these he gave attention. He understood well both how to speak and how to listen. This constancy in purpose as well as character was already becoming apparent to all of us who stood near the young monarch. He was not to be drawn hither and thither by new influences or changing currents.

Our army was his great concern. The most dangerous neighbor, Denmark, whose old King, Christian the Fifth, good-natured and peaceful-minded, was about to die, had with its scarcely two million people, an army of thirty thousand men. Charles's problem was more difficult, for our country, unlike Denmark, was not a homogeneous political unit, governed uniformly by similar laws. It was of greater extent, but weakly knit together. Almost a quarter of our troops consisted of fine cavalry, that always decided the conflict in Eastern Europe. Two thirds of the foot-soldiers had fine new flint-locked muskets, while the remainder carried pikes. The art of war our generals had all learned from the careful methods and rules taught in the thickly populated and fortressed Lowlands.

Not a day passed without Charles training his soldiers, seeming thereby, to those of us who watched him, to

be well aware that Sweden had attained her power in too short a time and by far too violent means, not to awaken the jealousy of those neighbors who had suffered by her gains. In all exchange of royal courtesies between him and other rulers, he was always the most generous giver. Where he received horses, he would send a princely retinue to Moskowa, with no less than three hundred iron cannon and silver dishes and platters weighing full five thousand ounces.

But no matter was too small for his royal concern. His chaplain's half-witted daughter would claim as much attention as his cannon or soldiers, and his ingenious mind hit at last upon a likely remedy for her feeble brains. And so with fatherly concern he wrote that every time nourishment was given her, she should hear "Our Father" read, as well as the 51st Psalm of David, and if she showed herself refractory and would not piously repeat the Lord's Prayer and the psalm, she should receive three or four strokes or whipping tests, two at a time, the strokes to cease as soon as she began to pray.

CHAPTER V

THE STORM BREAKS

In the spring of 1699, when war broke out between Denmark and Holstein, the duke with his Swedish bride fled to Sweden, which caused much anxiety throughout the land, both because of the great cost of supporting the entire Court of Holstein, consisting of more than fifty noble personages, as also because of the probable effect upon the Court of King Charles. The fortifications which the duke had had the audacity to build on the Danish frontier had excited the anger of Denmark. In fact, a whole nest was stirred up, and the wasps of Sweden, Prussia, Saxony, Brunswick and Hanover, as well as the sea powers, began buzzing and preparing to sting in concert with Denmark and the duchies. Charles, who had fared south to meet the duke and duchess, decided to transfer soldiers from his Wismar and Bremen regiments to assist in the defense of the fortifications in Holstein. There was truly no desire for war on the part of our King, but the whole foreign policy of our country had become entangled with the duchies; the King had no arrogant delight in war, but on the contrary was calm and thoughtful in his decision.

As by the wand of a magician, the boy became a man; his pranks gave way to serious, earnest work, but foreign diplomats mistook his complaisant exterior for ignorance of the danger. On all sides, for those who could see, trouble was brewing; conspiracies were rife; ambas-

sadors and confidential messengers were whispering behind closed doors, as busy as the devil in a gale of wind, and scurrying with bellying sails or galloping horses from one northern capital to another. The Swedish diplomats alone seemed lulled to sleep and unaware of the impending storm.

Saxon Augustus sent Count Galetski to Stockholm with every assurance of friendship, to confirm the peace of Olivia, of 1660, and with honeyed words to assure peaceful relations with Poland. The Tsar of Muscovy forced the Porte to conclude the first humiliating peace treaty it had ever signed with Christian powers; while in Moskowa the Swedish ambassadors came laden with gifts at the very moment the Saxon envoys arrived to plot against Sweden — Peter and Augustus having already as good as agreed upon common action, hand in hand with Denmark. At Rawa, Peter and Augustus had for four days feasted and drunk full royally together. Their mouths were full of cursing and deceit and fraud, and under their tongues were mischief and vanity. The platters were emptied, while not a cup was left undrained or a woman chaste. In their evil councils they parted our fair provinces between them, and in their farewell embraces exchanged their arms and clothing. So bejewelled a sword or embroidered a waistcoat Tsar Peter had never worn!

Throughout the meeting the cunning Augustus never failed to address the Grand Tsar of Muscovy as "Your Majesty," a title sedulously withheld from him on his visit to Leopold I. Augustus was to reach northward into Esthonia and Livonia; Peter still further north to

Ingria, therewith gaining access to the Baltic, the while Fredrik of Denmark might with peaceably free hands settle his Holstein business, and if Brandenburg would have a finger in the pie, why, she might have Stettin and Pomerania again. It was a pretty net in which the Lion Cub was to be caught, have his young teeth drawn and dangerous claws filed off. The net was there, woven by the statesmanship of Augustus, who, finding the throne of Poland an insecure perch, needed occupation for his soldiers in order to distract the attention and draw the eyes of his turbulent Polish subjects. But Augustus's craft at building a realm together was, alas for the military monarchy he dreamed of founding, not equal to his politic diplomacy.

The first thunderclap was to come from the eastern shores of the Baltic, as a direct result of the machinations of Patkul and Fleming, two adversaries who were time and again to cross the path of Sweden, one to curse her and be so miserably punished, the other to see her ruin. Livonia, the most northerly and the richest of the two provinces south of Finland, or our proper kingdom, had previously belonged to Knights of the Teuton Order. Russia, Poland and Sweden had all cast sheep's eyes upon it until we had finally seized it full a hundred years ago, and, possession being nine tenths of the law, the remaining tenth was ceded us by the Peace of Olivia. The religion of Luther had gradually, through Swedish possession, become that of the provinces, and this common interest thus leagued mother and daughters against Catholic Poland. The Baltic, open in the summer and autumn, was a constant thoroughfare.

For by degrees Finland, Ingria, Livonia, and Esthonia, became the great storehouse of Sweden, whence came most of our food — pork, salted and dried meats, butter, lard, and all kinds of fish from Finland and corn and wheat from the other provinces. On the other hand, differences in language, in laws and government and historical traditions, brought out their divergence. Each had its own constitution, under the sovereignty of Sweden — constitutions which, with their meetings, noble estates, and councils, were but bulwarks against the power of the noble landlords. The cities had their own special privileges, but little voice in the government of the country; the poor peasants were with few exceptions but serfs, and cruelly treated by their landlords.

Patkul, a creature in turn of one monarch after another, always in the service of him who was willing and able to strike the hardest at Swedeland, was a Livonian of noble and honorable family, who had been born in a Stockholm dungeon, his mother having followed his father who lay there under suspicion of high treason. He was of graceful person, ready wit, fine address, and great parts, improved by good learning of the sciences and knowledge of the world, thereto having a smooth tongue and knowing how to give an appearance of truth to the great falsities. I have heard wise statesmen say, and I have read memoirs of others who have insisted, that he, even more than their Majesties Peter and Augustus, was the greatest cause of Sweden's later misfortunes. His hatred was fierce and ceased only with his life. Here and there, everywhere, with industry prying into the corners of every capital of Europe to fan the

flame, he plotted and planned with unceasing energy and demoniacal skill, every thrust to be made at the heart of his own sovereign.

He had early been condemned to death after leading to Stockholm a deputation of Livonian gentry to protest against the rigor with which the land-recovery system was being carried out in his native province. The violent and offensive language of his petition caused him, like his father, to be accused of high treason. His flight to Switzerland availed him not against condemnation, *in contumaciam*, to lose his right hand and his head. But I shall later return to his ill-starred career and horrible end. Now, whispering in the ear of the all-too-willing Augustus, he told of the ease with which Livonia might be invaded and how the nobles there would rally to the Saxon arms. Of all times this was the most propitious for an invasion. Like a ripe apple Livonia would fall from the Swedish tree into the outstretched hand of Augustus. Sweden would be busy in Holstein and Peter rush down from the north.

An embassy with rare gifts and friendly demonstrations was sent to Sweden, while Patkul and the great Saxon General Fleming marched toward the frontier of the Swedish provinces. We first heard of it in this wise. King Charles, now eighteen years old, was out bear-hunting. Sweating at every pore, hunters around him, horns blowing, he had just caught, scarce fourteen miles from Stockholm, a fat old bear whose jaws were still red and her paunch full with a calf.

Through a hallooing throng broke a steaming horseman — good, faithful old Governor Dahlberg was send-

ing word of Saxony's perfidious act, the invasion of Livonia. Charles stood as petrified, and the scales fell from his eyes. Turning to Count Guiscard, the French Ambassador, who but a moment before had been sorting out the bear-nets, says Charles, "We shall soon force the Saxons to return the same way they came."

We soldiers of prophetic vision saw Sweden not only at war, but entering upon one by which she would either become as great a power as France, or sink forever into European obscurity. During that steaming ride from Kingsör to Stockholm, the boy of eighteen became a man, taking counsel in his own soul. War had become his handicraft and trade. Europe was once more to learn that a great warrior had ascended the throne of Sweden, and Gustavus Adolphus and Charles the Tenth had a worthy successor.

Charles clapped his spurs into the flanks of his horse and away down the road, and so into Stockholm, and therewith entered his capital for the last time in his life. Even shorter of speech and quicker of action than usual, Charles issued his orders. The page Kagg, who slept on the floor, outside the royal door, had no sleep that night. Couriers flew to Welling at Narva and to Dahlberg at Riga and to the fleet at Carlscrona — 10,000 strong the regiments across the Baltic were to march, while those of our own dear country were quickly ordered out and south, from one end of the kingdom to the other. Just as the Duchess of Holstein was giving birth to the illustrious Charles Fredrik,[1] the booming of the birthday cannons

[1] Later married to Anna, daughter of Peter the Great. Their son, Charles Peter Ulric, became Tsar under the title of Peter III.

mingled with the roll of the drums and the sound of the bugles calling the boys in blue and yellow to the colors.

Toward Denmark and Holstein were Charles's eyes first turned. "War, War!" was blown from the highest battlements and towers. Old regiments were completed, the clergy and burghers and good folks of Stockholm subscribing to the new ones, and we nobles as always gave a free company for the Crown. The duke had already left his newborn heir, hurrying south to his duchy, where Swedish troops had marched from Germany in to his assistance. Denmark was our first goal, for a Swede would, as is well known, rather stick a Dane than a pig.

In the midst of the bustle of preparation, I meeting the King in one of the corridors, he greeted me as captain. Whereupon, I stammering I know not what words of gratitude and devotion to His Majesty's service, he claps me his hand on my shoulder, and says I am to serve on his personal staff that he may not delay my further promotion for want of observation of my merit. "For," says he, "here is glory enough before us for all, and all shall share according to deserts." I think at my age I may set down the words he spoke of me as if they were spoken of another, for God knows I write now without vanity. When my commission came to me it was for a troop in His Majesty's own corps of drabants.

Spring turned into summer before the Swedish men-of-war were crowded with sailors and the pennants were hoisted on the topmasts. Audacity and quick resolution already marked the boy King, as well, alas, as the haughty reserve centred about himself, as the heavens

about the pole-star, which insisted upon standing alone, in spite of everybody and everything.

Like the eagle was he to swoop down and strike his talons in the flesh of the old enemy, Denmark, and where she least expected it. Instead of embarking for the seat of war in the duchies, Charles steered straight for the heart of Denmark, like unto Scipio Africanus of old when he carried the war to Africa in order to fight Hannibal in Italy.

Ah! those were gallant ships and fine fellows that were to fight for Sweden in that most glorious year of her history, 1700! The Swedish soldiers then surpassed all others. They displayed a military discipline never to be shaken, patience, unflinching courage, and a well-nigh miraculous capacity to suffer hunger, thirst, and cold, neglect, and all manner of privation. At the sight of the enemy they burned with impatience to attack. And, however great the danger, when their commander charged, they followed. My old soldier's heart still burns and swells with pride as I think of those noble boys in blue. Only once in eighteen years did the great commander hear that they were retreating, and then he was unable to believe his ears. Had Marlborough, or Prince Eugene, or Prussian Fredrik had them, they could have conquered the world! But as no other warrior known in history was Charles to possess the idolizing and deifying love and worship of these bravest of followers. Like unto his dying dogs, they would gladly lick his hand.

Thirty-eight proud ships of the line, besides many a gallant smaller vessel, set sail down Baltic shores with

VIEW OF STOCKHOLM

Painted in 1700 by an Unknown Artist

their twenty-seven hundred cannon, under the command of the deserving old general — Admiral Wachtmeister. Everybody was on board — Charles on the *King Charles;* Piper; Rehnsköld, the great general; Guiscard, the French Ambassador; and old Stuart who had taught the little Prince his first lessons in holding the sword and his last in taking a fortress.

As one of the King's personal staff, I was aboard the flagship with him. It was a clear, cool day in spring, with a brisk breeze on our quarter, the sea like sapphire glistening in the sun and dotted with white caps. I was ever a good sailor, and merely to be on the sea at any time in my life has been to me an uplifting of the spirit. But on this day, not only I but all of us were fairly intoxicated in mood by the clear air, the cool, salt breeze, and the excitement of the expedition. Whenever we could, for we preserved some decorum in the King's presence, we laughed and sang, knocked one another's hats overboard, and played a thousand monkey tricks like a pack of boys. Indeed, there were times when I thought that the King himself would go back to some of his boyishness. Now and then he joined in a little of our fun, but for the most part the responsibility of the work in hand was as a weight on his demeanor if not on his spirit.

I was always fonder of the sea than of aught else, and but for my father's service at court I think I should have entered the King's navy rather than his army. This voyage, short as it was, stays in my memory like a glimpse of sunshine through clouds. For hours I would lean over the rail by the bowsprit, watching the brave

bows of the ship shouldering the waves aside in a lather of white foam which went racing astern in lacy shreds over the rich sapphire and purple of the sea. I made friends with the quartermaster till he would give me a trick at the wheel now and then; and better than the feel of any horse do I love the tugging of a ship in a stiff wind, sailing close-hauled. And one night I took a full watch at the wheel, steering by compass and the fly at the masthead, which I could barely see against the stars as the mast swung back and forth among the constellations.

By day the fleet was a brave sight, and one that would make a man's heart leap up if he so much as had one in his bosom. The sea flashing and sparkling, the new white sails swelling bravely, the gay pennants stiffly whipping and snapping, and far away behind us, nigh as far as one could see, the white sails of our fleet flocking like birds behind their leader. Headland after headland we raised and passed, some near enough so that we could see them gray and green with rock and forest, others far low and purple like mere clouds in the offing. So we sailed to meet the other great fleet, that of Denmark, which around her coast, up and down her shores, spying across the Öresund, watching the Swedish headlands, was coming to meet us — the fleet which for centuries had been the pride and boast of the little country.

Up through the Skagerak and down through the Kattegat with every sail set, snuffing trouble in the spanking breeze, came Rooke's great fleet, with the crosses of St. George floating from every vessel's stern, closely

followed by the hearts of oak of the Netherlands. A great sight indeed to see. The guns of Elsinore saluted; the excited people rushed to the battlements. Across the narrow passage at Helsingborg the shore was lined with the terrified populace. Burning with impatience, the ardent young King berated old Wachtmeister for manœuvring and seeking protection under our coast instead of joining the allies' fleets — for the great sea powers were there by virtue of their being guarantors, like unto Sweden, of the Peace of Altona.

There were but two passages through the narrow sound; the only navigable one by which our large ships might join the allies was blocked by the Danes. And so we sailed. Charles sent this message to his admiral: —

> We cannot but feel that great glory and advantage are being lost for us by this dillydallying. Now the Englishmen and Hollanders have weighed anchor and with a favoring wind sailed nearer to Landscrona, showing thereby that in them is to be found greater zeal and gravity in their desire for union of our fleets than in us. This must call forth condemnation that we desire to place upon them the burden of sustaining the first blow, and later take the glory for ourselves. Thus we can no longer neglect to express to you our greatest displeasure, which will not be removed unless you, after this, attempt with braver behavior and maturer conduits, to repair what therein has been lacking.

A hard thrust indeed at the gallant old General-Admiral, who had for full forty years fought for his country and for twenty thereof built up her navy with great toil. Now with bleeding heart he replied to the impatience and recklessness of youth that he must sorrowfully acknowledge that since he first drew his sword and during the many years he, with blood, labor, and grief, had un-

sparingly fulfilled his duty as a subject to His Majesty's noble father and the fatherland, never had he received a harder blow than the King's order. He had nothing further to say except that he trusted that he would once more prove that he was second to none.

In reply Charles ordered the aged General-Admiral to attempt the shallow passage, adding that he understood not the meaning of the word "impossible." All except one or two of the Swedish squadron passed through, joined the allies, and the pennants of Denmark withdrew to the harbor of Copenhagen.

Shortly after, the landing upon Danish soil took place. The small boats, laden with grenadiers and chevaux-de-frise, led the van, closely followed by others carrying soldiers with shovels and fascines. In front of all was the King's barge filled with his brave guardsmen. Count Guiscard, the French Ambassador, was then with him, for as we were going down into the barge from the ship, the count came forward to go with us. "Mr. Ambassador," said Charles to him in Latin, — indeed, he never addressed him in the French tongue, for that he would only employ if addressing King Louis, and it were rather for the ambassador to speak Swedish, — "Mr. Ambassador, you have no quarrel with the Danes: I therefore beg you, go no further."

"Your Majesty," answered the count in French, "the King my master has commanded me to stay beside Your Majesty, and I hope that Your Majesty will not to-day dismiss me from your court, which has never been more brilliant."

With these words he gave King Charles his hand and

they both, with Carl Piper, sprang into the barge. When they had come within three hundred feet of the shore, His Majesty, who found progress slow, jumped into the water up to his waist, whereat Rehnsköld whispered me in the ear that the King read Latin no less diligently than he spoke it. I understood that he was thinking of Cæsar's first landing in Britain, and belike he even thought it was Cæsar who leaped into the sea; but there was no time for disputation. Ambassador, minister, officers, and soldiers followed the King, and all waded ashore through the whining of the bullets. But 'twas not much of a bloody touch!

The General-Admiral hoisted the red flag upon the main mast of his flagship, the *Great Admiral;* eight cannons were fired, the Swedes advanced, and the small intrenchment of Danish foot and horse guarding the Danish shores at this point stood not to their tackle but fled before our troops. In the King's Copenhagen there was terrible consternation, the while our regiments, after safe transport and quartering in the country, spent the time most pleasantly shooting stags and roebucks or trading provisions with the mild and complaisant peasants. Some of them, too, made bold with their first convenience to trespass upon the country for a few horses, to remount. In order to satisfy their curiosity as well as show their admiration, many a citizen of Copenhagen joined with the sailors of the allied fleets in viewing King Charles drill his regiments and order his army to make their evolutions within the Swedish camp.

In the duchies, Denmark was in an equal pickle. Sweden, Holstein, and their German allies shortly

forced upon King Fredrik, still weak from smallpox, an ignominious peace at Traventhal, the tidings of which were brought King Charles at breakneck speed as he was about to advance upon Copenhagen. And therewithal our King wrote a gracious letter to his Danish cousin and received one like unto it from him. With many a token of the regard of the people, Charles and his army set sail for the eastern seat of war and the day of reckoning with Augustus and his perfidious Muscovite ally.

Back went our troops to Sweden to reimbark for this second enterprise. Glad were we all when we sighted the distant shores of Carelia, for the great wind had made the stoutest of us fearful of taking more nourishment, after all we had cast up into the sea; and many of the horses had in the pickle crushed each other, being thrown by the high waves. It was the worst voyage sure that ever man went. We sang hymns and praises to God when we at last came upon the coast and landed at Pernau.

Our affairs, though they showed us a very dismal aspect, were not as desperate as they might have been; but great was our indignation and hatred when we heard of the treacherous conduct of the Muscovite. His ambassador of peace and good-will had but a short yesterday ago been received by our gracious King while we camped in Denmark, with the sound of drums and bugles and the greatest honor. On the selfsame day, we now learned, his perfidious trumpets had declared war against us from the walls of Moskowa.

Erik Dahlberg, bravest of Swedish soldiers and greatest of engineers, had, with Welling's help, successfully

withstood all attacks on Riga by the Saxons under Fleming, who at last, disappointed and desperate, were forced to turn their attention to Dünamünde.

The Saxons might expect further chastisement, but not so the Muscovites pressing hard poor Horn near the city of Narva. Therefore, when we spread our sails to cross the Baltic, it was indeed for the gulf Riga that we made; but when we had weathered the headland, the Kolken, we turned not south to Riga itself but kept on our northeasterly course to Pernau. There we landed and arrayed our forces for the long march before us, for in truth no one of us guessed, not Charles himself, how long a march it was to be. The King thought only of our brave comrades so sorely besieged at Narva. Scarcely would he give us time to catch our breath from our rough voyage before he would push on to relieve them. Messenger after messenger he despatched, promising them a speedy revival, and long before we were in marching order he wrote to Horn: "To-morrow we shall break up from here, and at the earliest reach your vicinity with so strong a detachment that, with God's assistance, we shall be sufficiently grown to dislodge the said rebel and compel the rascals to give way."

And on the morrow, indeed, forth he set, before half of our force was ready to march. He took with him all his cavalry and such of our light infantry as he thought could keep up on the forced march to Reval, on which he set out; all told, perhaps between seven and eight thousand men, as I have said, about half of all the army that sailed with him. Thus began the march to the most glorious engagement ever fought by Swedish arms.

CHAPTER VI

NARVA AND THE SAXON CAMPAIGNS

And now I come to that great event which will ever in times to come make the hearts of our children beat with pride at the thought that they may call themselves Swedes. Yes, because of the bravery, endurance, and contempt of death of the Swedish soldiers, Narva shall ever be a glorious word for Sweden. My own old heart beats fast within me as I recall it once again. Hunger was gnawing at my vitals and frost freezing every extremity of the body in those frightful days between Wesenberg and our destination.

It was a desolate land, at least as we saw it then in the winter. What it may be at a more fruitful season I cannot guess. For the most part it lay low, rolling and monotonous, low brown hills and the icy muddy road torn by our horses' hoofs and rutted by such wagons and artillery as we had with us in our swift march, the King ever to the fore of a group, of which I was one, beside and behind him. Our horses' hoofs clashed in the ice of the road as if it had been paved with sheets of glass; but by noon they would be up to their bellies in mud. As I look back at it, it seems to me we scarce saw a gleam of sunshine all the way to Narva, but ever it was smoky fog rolling over from the sea or from the lakes to the eastward. Cold rain had driven in on a sharp wind; it wet us to the skin and trickled down our spines

EUROPE AT THE TIM

From the Map by K. von Spruner and C

OF THE BATTLE OF NARVA

Poetschneider, published by Justus Perthes, Gotha

into our saddles, as well as a fine sleet like salt that beat and scratched our faces, blinded our eyes, and sifted into every thread of our garments. Such weather a man may endure if ever he have a bright fire and a hearty meal at the end of a day of it, but if there were a hearty meal to be had from the time we set sail till Narva was won, I have no memory of it now. But we minded it not and laughed in spite of it all, saying that we would not have been so hasty to empty our stomachs in crossing the Baltic had we known how long it would be ere they should be filled again. Even our poor beasts were so empty of fodder that we called them our drums, and beat their hollow flanks with our boots to urge them on.

For ourselves, our spirits urged us on rapidly enough, like hounds on the scent of the Muscovite, with the scent growing ever stronger, as we neared Narva. It was a desperate chance we had before us. If we had stopped to think, we should not have seen a chance in a thousand that we should succeed in our venture, but it was not our business to think. That we left to the King. High up in the pass of Pyhäjoggi stood General Scheremetoff with five thousand men. They fled before our advance guard as chaff before the wind — and no other force opposed us as we swept through the pass. Praised be God on high, we reached Lagena through the mud and torrents! Every heart stood still in our camp after we had given the good Swedish signal of every soldier in the army firing two shots in the air. Were the gallant defenders of Narva still there to hear that Swedish help was near — or was it all over and the Muscovites within our fortress? A few hour-long minutes and

through the sleet of the winter night came back to our gladdened ears the greeting of two distant hollow discharges of cannon and musketry. Ah, verily it was here the Lord was to let us set our feet on the necks of our enemies, that we might utterly destroy them.

There were never hungrier beasts or men than those who staggered to their feet in the blackness of that winter morning, the glorious thirteenth of November. By ten we had driven in outposts; King Charles had reconnoitred his ground and once more we gave our double Swedish musquetry signal, as a challenge to the enemy to charge. From regiment to regiment ran the watchword, "With God's Help." Down the lines it was repeated, in every accent of country, mountain, valley, and province. The army all drawn up in battalion was a sorry sight for the eyes of an old campaigner, but above the lank, bedraggled figures were faces burning with the determination to conquer or die. On the right commanded Welling, with the foot under Posse in front and the cavalry behind under Wachtmeister. On the left sat surly old Rehnsköld of dare-devil tactics so dear to Charles's heart — he who became victor of Halmstadt, Lund, and Landscrona; Maidel and Stenbock commanded the regiments under him; Sjöblad and Rebbing were in the centre. From a little hill above us our cannons were already roaring.

We of the drabants were with the rest of the horse, on the left behind the first columns of foot. We had had little sleep that night, the men because there was no comfort to be had, and the officers because of the work to be done in preparation for the attack. All night long

we rid back and forth with messages and commands, and all the forenoon moving our commands into position, and driving in the Russian outposts. Major Appelman, our artillery officer, had succeeded in overtaking us during the night with sixteen pieces of field-artillery, though how he did it I could not guess, over the roads that had so nearly mired our horses. These, with the help of the guards, he had placed on a small hill to the rear of our centre. As soon as they were placed, they began throwing round shot over our heads, first into the outposts; then, as these were driven in and we moved to their places, they began to get the range of the bastions and trenches. These extended, as I doubt not all who read history know as well as I, across the point of land in the bend of the river, from the river on one side to the river on the other. They were in point of fact the entrenchments which the Russians had thrown up to protect what was originally their rear as they besieged the city on the extreme point of the bend. In most places the wall was some nine feet high, with a six-foot ditch outside it. Within, the Russian troops numbered some forty-eight thousand, as we learned afterward, together with one hundred and sixty pieces of cannon. Foot and horse together we numbered between seven and eight thousand men.

At this time I dare not think of the foolhardiness of our enterprise; at that time I did not think of it at all. It is true we joked about leaping our horses, squadron by squadron, over the nine-foot walls, and wishing that the Muscovites would come out so that we might fill the moat with their bodies, and the like; but I do not recall

that it occurred to us to wonder seriously how we were to get over; the King had ordered us to attack; that was enough for us. Thus we laughed and chatted as we sat our horses in the ranks early in the afternoon, for the most part turned in our saddles, watching to the rear for the rocket signal for the attack. Then came by a marching regiment in haste toward the front, carrying huge bundles of branches, like big faggots, only green, and of them we made sport again, asking them where they would find handles to their brooms, and how they would stop round shot with twigs, and such like folly. But they were to fill the fosse for our passage of it.

As we looked to the rear suddenly there piled up behind us a huge black snow-cloud, and even as we began to feel the icy wind of it, we saw against its belly the red streaks of the signal rockets; whereat we yelled like demons, and set our faces to the front. Almost at the moment the snow came whipping and whirling on the wind against our backs, and with that the fight began. We moved forward, freezing to the marrow with the biting snow-wind, with not enough fighting for quarter of an hour or more to keep us warm. Then the foot regiments before us broke through, and we went forward with a rush, into the faces of the Russian gunners, who were blinded by the snow, for most of their shots went wild, yet they took some toll of us, too. How we got in even then I cannot say now; for what with the confusion and hellish noise of the fight, and the darkness of the storm, I saw little and remember less. But I recall that, when we were within, there was scant room for cavalry at first, what between the tents and the redoubts; and that with

the ditches and the guy-ropes we lost many a horse with broken legs. And from then on it was rather butchery than battle. I have seen many a hard-fought field, but never saw a slaughter like unto that which befell the Muscovite hordes. The water in the trenches was turned to blood, and the corpses were piled high as the bastions. For the God of battles was with us, and He knew the righteousness of our cause.

Twice His Majesty was sinking in the damnable morass, but think how the Lord preserved him! As he lay with his horse half under water, and the horse could not get up with him, and no one was by him but the Chamberlain Axel Hård, he at last cried aloud in Finnish to two Finns not far off to come and help "Konnunga." [1] And when they heard the magic word "Konnunga," they ran apace and were able to pull him up out of the water, but the one boot and stocking remained in the mire, and His Majesty's sword was lost; the horse they also pulled out, one dragging the bridle, the other firing his musket on the tender part under the tail. Then His Majesty took one of Axel's boots upon his naked leg, and a sword from a guardsman, and rushed once more into the fray. Oh! but it was fine to see Stenbock spitting between his jolly oaths as he beat the dust out of the Russian jackets with his rapier! Laughing, kindly even in the fight, beloved of all, true disciple of his King — to live, to see and conquer at both Helsingfors and Gadebusch; in at the beginning as well as at the end!

But where was Tsar Peter? We hunted him in and

[1] The King.

out, breaking through many a mêlée and solid square to reach the gold lace of an officer, only to be rewarded with the cursing and reviling of a French or German tongue or cowering of a Boyar, but no Peter. With as much courage as a frog has hair on his belly, he had come a few nights before to the Prince of Croy and besought him to assume the highest command, urging matters of state required his immediate departure. Later, amid the Prince of Croy's baggage we found the accusing order of the Tsar in which we read in the French tongue: "Comme sa Majesté Czarienne, pour des affaires très importantes, part d'ici avec le Feld-Maréchal-Général, pour s'aboucher avec S. M. le Roi de Pologne, nous laissons à Son Altesse Sérénissime toute notre armée." And then, as our brave boys struggled onward through the snow to Narva, Peter fled as fast as horseflesh would carry him, onward and away from the battle.

And now, despite the vast numbers against us, the bastions were soon surmounted and ditches crossed. Then on the right there was nought left for the Russians but to flee to the river and bridge behind them. There it was they went to wreck. Battalions broke in wild flight, the Russian soldiers lay like sand along the slopes. In their ignorance and rage the soldiers, not understanding the orders of their foreign officers, would have killed them all as they turned upon them, had they not surrendered to our protection. Thus we took the high and mighty commander, the Prince of Croy, the Major-General Allard, and many others in high command.

But this was not all. Before the night was over, there fell as our booty the whole train of artillery, the colors

and standards and all supplies, as well as the Tsar's own military chest with thirty-two thousand roubles in silver coin.

As for me, my man brought me a very good horse with a furniture on him, and one pistol of extraordinary workmanship. The prisoners that we took but could not keep, because of our own small force, were merely incredible. Many also escaped, for as I have just related, in their terror and cowardice they took to the bridge and river. Praised be God, the ice was not upon the river! If it had been, so many would not so happily have succumbed. It proved the greatest delectation to see, when they had been driven as immense black masses toward the bridge, how this broke into pieces, and soon the icy water was crowded with heads sticking up and arms and legs, as well as many horses beating the bodies down with their hoofs. Then we shot at them and screamed in our joy as when out shooting ducks. It was an indescribable delight to have seen how God's hand manifestly showed its omnipotence, with so small a power as ours, to beat and confound so great a force as were these barbarians. No wonder His Majesty afterwards was joyous and glad, and played and danced in the Christmas straw! As in the days of the wandering of the Children of Israel, when they gazed enchanted upon the Red Sea engulfing the chariots of Pharaoh, so also did we Swedes watch the waters of the Narova engulf its Russian victims.

Scarce less wonderful was it to see the discipline of our poor famished soldiers when they entered the great and beautiful tents of the enemy, where the tables were

set with silver platters and plates and cases and goblets, and filled with food and drink. One such I saw which I took to be an officer's mess tent lined with crimson hangings. Adown the centre, cunningly upheld by the posts of the tent and on folding supports, ran a long table spread for the meal with fifteen or twenty covers on a magnificent damask cloth. All the service of silver or plate, enough to load a pack train, and about the sides seemingly massive carved sideboards, but I doubt not they folded cunningly as did chairs set to the table, and on the sideboards more silver and plate. Above was a dais or *estrade* for a concert of musicians and their instruments, viols, harps, flutes, hautbois, and the like all in place, but the players, belike, at the bottom of the Narova. Thereto was abundant wine of Champagne, and a kind of white brandy they use much among the Muscovites, which is very potent, and disagreeable to the taste.

All this plate, as I say, we left untouched for then, and I think much of it was sent to Sweden, and after some was distributed to the officers of that battle. I have and treasure a silver can graved with arms, a covered posset or caudle-cup nicely graved, and a large silver salver. But with horses, arms, and the like, we officers might fare as we pleased. I had, as I have said, a good horse, a stout red roan, with saddle, and one pistol in the left holster, mounted and damascened with gold. Besides this I picked up later a belt of soft leather, a money-belt well stuffed with gold coins, and in one small pocket a huge brilliant, six small ones, a flawed emerald but large and well-cut, a handful of garnets

and a fine turquoise. It was made to wear for safety under the clothes, but never for a man save it were some wasp-waisted young lieutenant. But pillage was there none, for the King's orders were strict and he cared no more than a louse if a disobedient soldier were put to death. A little more butchery and patience, and there would be corn brandy for every gullet, however parched.

Night fell and put an end to the fighting, and with the dark came the deadly chill from which we had suffered all through our long march, and now that we had reached our goal we had scarcely more of comfort than we had had on the road. With all the richness of the booty we found there was scarce anything of what we wanted most, namely, wood to our fires. For that we searched the camp from end to end, but not a stick could we find; and whether the Russians had burned all to keep their cowardly carcasses warm, or whether they had had none, we could not tell. Some found rich fur coats of which there were not a few in the personal effects of officers and courtiers, and when we had them, we wished right heartily that we had had the camp to pillage before we set out on our long march from Pernau. But for fuel the best we could find was straw, and a poor thing it was, though it kept us doubly warm with the need we had ever to walk back and forth bringing it for our fires, whereon it burned right merrily as we put it on, a little at a time, though at times when one heedlessly put on too much it nigh smoked us out of our huts.

One of the warmest of these huts a dozen or so of us officers had found and occupied, and we too had a hot

straw-fire burning well in the fire-place, and were going, turn about, to fetch our fuel when the King came in to us. He was muddy from head to foot and wet to the skin from his adventure in the swamp, of which I have told, but his spirit was never better, and he commanded us all to sit again on such seats as we had when he entered, nor would he take a seat from any of us, but pushed forward a drum which lay by the wall into the corner by the fire, and there sat down to dry himself as best he could. For a moment or two he spoke with happiness and spirit of our victory, then, as if overcome with weariness, he leaned and laid his head on the shoulder of one who sat next him. I mind not at this day who it was, but it was not I, as one who hath told the tale relates. Scarcely had he done so when he fell fast asleep, and slept the while we said of him in low tones that his sleep was like that of a babe, as tranquil and untroubled, rather than that of a warrior in the midst of battle and pillage.

Ten thousand Russians lay dead upon the field and six thousand more had already laid down their arms and surrendered, and defiled before Charles with bared heads. The following day all that had not escaped followed their ignoble example.

Then Charles and his suite took their stand upon one of the conquered slopes, his army in a hollow square surrounding him, the glad inhabitants of Narva all around. In the middle of the square stood a field chaplain. There were placed in front of him three drums, of which one was placed upon the two others, thus forming a little altar. The music played, we soldiers sang the

A

B

C

D

E

F

A. Medal with Portrait of Charles XII, struck during his Youth
B. Medal with Portrait of Charles XII, struck after his Death
C, D. The Saturn Dollar of Copper with Silver Facing, coined in 1718 and intended as Legal Tender for Silver
E, F. Medal struck after the Victory of Narva

verses of a hymn, and when the song was still, the field chaplain read a short prayer.

"That is Måns Stenbock, with his Dalekarlias," said King Charles. "They sing the song he himself has written."

Then, with their chief in front of the regiment, those brave lads marched before the King. And he turned to the poor dejected Prince of Croy and handed him two thousand dollars of the realm, which gave him great joy as he no longer had a single stiver left. Now for many a night to come he could again make merry in his cups.

Stenbock,[1] Måns "Sly-Fox," as His Majesty was wont to call him, and Narva's gallant defender Henning Horn, were both made generals, for our enemies had fallen into the pit that they had dug for us. Stenbock was a complete soldier indeed, and for that reason became soon so well beloved by our gallant King, that he, as it was, hardly knew how to go about action without him. Many other regiment and line officers were promoted, and none was more surprised than I when the King made me colonel, and insisted that I had done some feat of gallantry—but how he could have known of such a thing I know not, for he could not have seen aught that I did, and I knew not well myself what I wrought.

In every town and village and Swedish countryside the joyous tidings were soon proclaimed, while the great cannons, given Peter by our gracious Lord, as well as trophies and banners, were carried in triumph through

[1] Stenbock, *i.e.* the wild goat, also called "The Buck" by Charles.

the Stockholm streets which were most magnificently illuminated, and thereto Tessin contributed with many a beauteous device. *Te Deum* was sung, accompanied by the discharge of cannon.

But such was the pride and ignorance of the people of Moskowa, that they thought they had been vanquished by a superhuman power, and that we Swedes were right magicians. Public prayers were ordered to Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of Muscovy. And thus it sounded:

O, Thou who art our perpetual consoler in all our adversities, great Saint Nicholas! Infinitely mighty, by what sin have we offended thee in our sacrifices, our genuflexions, reverences, and actions of grace, since thou hast thus abandoned us? We have implored thy assistance against these terrible, insolent, enraged, frightful, invincible destroyers, when, as lions and bears who have lost their young, they attacked, frightened, wounded, and killed us by the thousands, we who are thy people. As it is impossible that this has come about without magic and enchantment, we supplicate thee, O Great Saint Nicholas, to be our champion and our standard-bearer, to rid us of this mob of sorcerers, and to chase them very far from our frontiers with the recompense which is their due.

To peace our Charles from henceforth would give no ear; his arms were invincible. To those who implored him now to listen to the prayers of the ambassadors, or at least the wisdom of Bengt Oxenstjerna, he replied, "It would put our glory to shame if we were to lend ourselves to the slightest treaty of accommodation with one who so vilely prostituted his honor."

CHAPTER VII

THE OPENING OF THE POLISH CAMPAIGNS

HERE I would digress from martial events to contemplate as it were at a distance my hero and the wide European arena which he was now about to enter. After the lightning swiftness, the masterly daring and tactical acumen which he had displayed in his descent upon Denmark and Muscovy, every court of Europe had its eyes riveted upon the Swedish soldier. He was no longer to be reckoned with in Scandinavia alone, but as a great power in Europe, and every move he made in the great game of chess would threaten every piece upon the European board. Charles was soon to change this war, which his enemies had designed as a bare attack on Sweden's position by the Baltic, to a complete remodelling of the whole system of European states. In this way his cause gained the same importance as the War of the Spanish Succession, in which all were concerned, and was involved in many ways with its phases.

Charles the Twelfth's decision to destroy Augustus became the turning point in the history of Sweden — one may even say of Europe. In the first astonishing year of our campaigns, the lad of barely nineteen had shown himself the equal if not the superior of both Marlborough and Prince Eugene. The great qualities that were soon to place him as one of the great generals of the world, by the side of Alexander, Hannibal, and

Cæsar, were becoming clearly defined against the pale light of the northern sky, and the day was all but gone. As he advanced along the path of his great career, Charles could but change. A one-sided education and the constant life of the camp caused the early orphan and absolute monarch of fifteen to develop the inflexible will which became the basis of his character; the frolicsome, good-natured, sporting youth was to be transformed into the severe, astute and reserved soldier. His courage and the mathematic-logical manner of military reasoning, as well as his practical method of campaigning, astounded all beholders. His modesty and simplicity combined with his rare skill in choosing the right moment, his strength of body and will, were more and more to excite wonder, as well as also, alas! his failure to understand human nature, his sacrifice of human life, and disregard of all advice contrary to his own preconceived opinion. His unconquerable will never to submit was to baffle one after the other of his opponents. He was never defeated in spirit, save possibly by himself. In truth, he might, as he ripened, be said to become the last and complete embodiment of the ages that were to pass with him; the embodiment of their self-assurance and despotism, and mayhap also of their selfishness.

But now, at the time of which I write, there was neither sign nor warning of the swiftly approaching catastrophe. I would now also, in honesty, mention his carelessness in providing for the proper base of supplies for his armies. In body and soul no general was ever better equipped. And he would abstain from

CHARLES XII

From the Painting by Von Krafft in Gripsholm Palace

the indulgences so common to youth and, above all, to princely personages. Never did I see wine pass his lips after one day in his earlier youth, when, upon returning from the chase with a parched throat, he drank most copiously. Whereupon he presented himself before the Queen Dowager, forgetful of the gore and rents made by the wild beasts that still disfigured his costume. The Queen berating him upon his indecency, and the King unwilling to listen to the correction, he turned so hurriedly upon his heel that his spur, catching, as misfortune would have it, in the edge of the cloth, the small-beer soup, steak, and all were dragged from the board, scalding the Queen Dowager most severely. The following day, when the two again met at the royal table, the old Queen more violently than before recommenced her scolding, whereupon the young monarch, commanding his cup-bearer to fill his glass, drained it to her health, saying as he did so, since the wine had made him lack in respect, it was the last time in his life that he would touch it.

While pimps and procuresses were presenting old King Louis with country wenches, Charles in all his life was faultless of amorous adventure. And further than this, though his manner toward the gentler sex may at times have been wanting in the scented gallantry of the boudoir, owing to his constant life in the camp, his behavior was never lacking in the truest courtesy, nor failed in the higher duties of a king. Though absolutely indifferent, he was ever faultless in demeanor.

The laconic answers of the young King and his taciturnity became more and more noticeable as he be-

came a man. Often when in his tent I have seen him courteously receive foreign ministers or other persons whose discourse became displeasing to him. After having listened for a few minutes, without answering a word, but staring them straight in the face, he would, like the captured sparrow in a barn, rush out of the opened flap, jump upon the horse, always ready saddled night and day, and away he would go at full gallop, adjutants and drabants trying at breakneck speed to catch up with their master.

His device might indeed have been, "For me nothing is impossible." His habits were frugal and his work harder than that of all others, excepting perchance Carl Piper. A chapter in his big silver-clasped Bible, a dish of beer-soup and a piece of bread, were all he called for before beginning the vigorous mental and physical work of the morning. More than half an hour was rarely given to his silent meal, while nine in the evening would, in days of rest, find him stretched upon his field-cot, and two or three in the morning hard at work with sleepy secretaries.

And yet he would never give us soldiers a task which he would not willingly fulfil himself. His self-sacrificing courage, his hopeful composure and unprejudiced foresight were an example to us all, and never would he say to us, "Go ahead and fight"; but instead, "Come along"; and then he himself went first.

And as I sit here now and think and write and think again of the many qualities that so marked his natural talent, his remarkable memory, especially in everything connected with ciphers or mathematical problems, me-

thinks, bordered upon that of a genius. Again and again have I seen him snatch the despatch, handed by the steaming courier to the minister, from the hand of the latter and read it to him, the ciphers being all as clear in his memory as the very letters of the alphabet; and he would forthwith dictate to his astonished Hermelin a reply giving each cipher correctly. Finally, I would say that in the one great science in which a monarch should excel, that of theology, Charles was ever a master. Until the day of his death he considered it his highest duty and most sacred privilege to guard in his Protestant realm his subjects from all false and heretical doctrines, for which the Almighty God must gladly have received his soul and posterity bless his memory.

On the 13th of December we broke up from Narva 'mid the rejoicings of the liberated populace, whose scanty supplies we no longer durst eat. Through the snows of Livonia we marched until we reached the gates of Lais, where we were to rest through months of winter suffering, well-nigh until the opening of spring.

Here from the old feudal castle he sought to make conquerors of every one of his soldiers, so that Augustus's army, full thirty thousand strong, might bite the grass at the advance of the Swedish columns. Here he drilled that most glorious band of soldiers, "the drabants," whose fame was even to eclipse the musketeers of the King of France. Every one a hero who would rather fight than breathe and never returned from combat unless victorious. Selected from among the strongest and bravest of the army, the very soldiers of the corps were all sergeants or lieutenants, and to be one of their com-

manding officers was an honor as great as that of the general of infantry or cavalry. This I may say at this day long after, though I was one of them. There was hard work for one and all. Though the men were dirty, their arms were clean and bright, and the horses were strong and hardy, and well taught their exercises. The soldiers learned their business exactly, and their wheelings, marchings, counter-marchings, and exercises were done with such order and readiness, that the distinct words of command were hardly of any use among them.

Though drilling and shooting and manœuvring were the order of the day, still many a merry hour we whiled away 'mid the biting cold of the winter, while waiting for reinforcements to arrive from home. With much sweetness of humor would His Majesty discourse with the meanest soldier. On St. Charles's Day, the 28th of January, Count Stenbock arranged a great hunting party, followed by a dinner and an opera. This was entitled "A joyous play and song of honor, given in an excellent Opera to the honor and good cheer of His Majesty, after the unequalled victory over the Russians, upon the great and happy Carol's Day, which is the 28th of January, in the winter quarters by the Castle of Lais, arranged by His Majesty's true man and Major-General the noble Count Stenbock." Stenbock not only composed the verses and the sweet tunes, but conducted the opera himself, and held for the King a right German oration. While one ballet represented "Some silent thoughts which danced incognito and were addressed to Count Piper, another was performed by fighters with

the quill." The last number was danced by all the generals, who sang a "madrigal."

There being no real enemy or fortresses to take, His Majesty built fortresses of snow and divided his guardsmen into two parties, and they fought for their possession so lustily that full many an arm and leg were broken before the walls were demolished. And when there were no further bastions to be taken, I remember how the King would on a frosty night break so many window-panes with snowballs that the commanding officers and civil officials did the following day, in deepest submission, petition that a royal court glazier might be appointed for the army, to reset the panes, — a petition His Majesty proved his good heart by granting. When this jest no longer amused the King, he devised another, namely riding into the camp in the calm of the night, imitating the frightful shrieks and cries of the Russians, so that all would tumble out of their beds and rush into the streets with naked swords, ready for the fight.

The peasant weddings which we attended or arranged by good-will or force were also a distraction and merriment to us. In writing to his sister, the Princess Ulrica Eleanora, King Charles says that

> They take place with many compliments. She, the bride, has to shriek and cry without ceasing and lament her virginity; carries a cloth in front of her face, which from bashfulness she will not show. And he grabs her under the arm and trots off with her. In front goes one with a sword with which he makes the sign of the cross as he passes each door. Later, when they should drive to be wedded, the bride sets herself upon a cushion in the sled and he sits on his knees in her lap, and the whole bridal procession starts off like a pack of

wolves with a bagpipe leading them. Those who live near the Russian border dance in the Russian manner and stand and trip and tramp toward each other in cadence and scream and bend and twist their backs as if they were cats.

P.S. I beg my dear sister to give my greeting to the mistress of the Court and the Ladies Clodt, Gutermut, and Emeranca, — and Pompey and Snushane[1] have asked me to greet Madame Mignone and any other dogs of the Court.

About this time, we were much saddened by the death of Augustus John Stegeborg, Prince Palatine, who was attacked by the purple fever. We took out his intestines, and embalmed his body full carefully before sending it to Stockholm to be interred among the Princes of the Blood. We were soon however cheered by a phenomenon appearing at noonday upon the sky. For we saw two suns upon the heaven, each surrounded by different arches, and seeming to form a double C.

It was not easy to rid ourselves of the foreign ambassadors who had followed our army as bees do the honey-pot, nor for Piper to answer their insistent demands for audiences. In one thing His Majesty was however glad to accede to the request contained in the Swedish minister's letter from Paris. He wrote that His Most Christian Majesty had expressed especial desire to see how those fellows looked who could beat an enemy ten times as strong. Charles, after reading the despatch, put it in his pocket and continued the review. Coming to the Björneborg's regiment, the King looked upon his Finns with pleasure. Suddenly he commanded one of the Finns to step forward. He was a white-haired, broad-shouldered fellow, his face stained with powder,

[1] Busybody (a Paul Pry).

just a perfect specimen of his bluff, obstinate, sinewy race. He was ordered to go at once as courier to Paris, taking with him a letter which on the spur of the moment was signed by His Majesty.

According to orders, with many an inquiry on the road, the Finn at last arrived at the palace of the Swedish minister in Paris, where he was told the minister was at the Court. As the soldier had received orders personally to deliver his letter, he refused to give it up, and was thus guided by a lackey to his master, who, looking at the Finn with great joy, requested him to wait in the anteroom. Thereupon the minister returned to the hall where the Court was assembled and informed King Louis that one of the Swedish soldiers was outside, having arrived according to the wish expressed by the Great Monarch. The King at once ordered the Caroline [1] brought in, whereupon King Louis and the whole court gazed upon him with an astonishment which included his simple blue coat with its yellow belt containing the long sword. The King ordering refreshments brought, the powdered footman came with a tray whereupon was a bottle and a small glass as well as cakes. The fellow grabbed all the cakes and drained the whole bottle at a gulp. The King then desired that his fencing-master should be called. Upon entering, he too regarded the Finn with astonishment, then made him a genteel compliment and presented him a foil. The Finn gazed upon the fencing-master without comprehending his intention. In order to make himself understood, he struck

[1] The name "Caroliner," by which Charles the Twelfth's soldiers became known throughout Europe.

the breast of the Caroline a couple of times. The latter reddened. With a quick movement the fencing-master thereupon hit him upon the tip of the nose. The Swedish fellow took a rapid step or two towards his antagonist, spat in his fist, and gave him a staggering blow on the temple. The fencing-master fell stone dead against the wall.

When the soldier returned in April and had given the King a report of how he had fared at Versailles, the King made him a petty officer.

Drilling his soldiers, making of them old fellows used to boxing, and lads with iron faces, mustering the new regiments arriving from Swedeland, and working late and early with Piper and the others in the chancellery, were now the routine of the day, broken in upon by the consideration of such house matters as craved the King's attention. One day it might be a petition, most gracefully couched in verse, from the ladies of Stockholm, desiring permission to deck their vain backs with dresses of foreign stuffs, in place of good homespun materials. Or again, a communication from the clergy, complaining that their revenues no longer were as in the old days, when they received both cloth and corpse moneys and did not have to contribute to the army. Now, alas, they seldom received an order for a decent funeral oration, for many crammed their dead into the earth without religious ceremonies, and several thousands of people in the capital were of such meanness they gave nought to the clergy.

With the breaking of spring, Charles turned in earnest to what he chose to call his handicraft; moved upon

Dorpat, where our army now numbered full twenty-three thousand men, and from there on to Riga, opposite which on the other side of the river Düna, lay strongly entrenched the third of our enemies, the Saxons.

The General Otto Welling in Livonia and the crafty old warrior, Count Erik Dahlberg, Governor of Riga, had smelt the Saxon danger at the earliest machinations of Patkul, before we ever descended upon Denmark; and I have long since recounted how our careful young King turned as it were into sober manhood as the bud opens into flower, between sunrise and sunset, after that eventful day when the Rigan messenger met our jolly hunting party. Troops had hastily been summoned from garrisons all about, and so gallantly had Riga withstood both attack and siege that the Saxons had to content themselves with Dünamünde in place of Riga and withdraw across the river. Dahlberg had been too sly an old fox to credit Patkul's stories that the advance into Lithuania of the Saxon armies was but for the purpose of settling or quieting the endless quarrels between the Sapieha and the Oginsky and assisting the former in their downfall.

Tsar Peter, after his hurried departure from Narva, now full gladly listened to the honeyed words of Patkul. The pipe had now another sound. Augustus at the head of his Saxon armies was the cock of the walk. Undefeated were his soldiers, and Prussia whispered fair promises in Peter's ears after his having, first of European monarchs, acknowledged the new-fledged king.[1]

[1] Frederick William the First, Elector of Brandenburg, assumed the title of King of Prussia at Königsberg in January, 1701.

A meeting took place between Peter and Augustus at Berze, where the Saxons made their terms and Augustus, surrounded by his German gentlemen, Saxon troops, and Lithuanian nobles, received Peter and his Boyars with splendor smacking of overbearing pride. Full well did the Saxon covet the finely caparisoned Chinese horses, the gold-embroidered tapestries, and the porcelains which Peter had brought to his castle, as well as the money-chests and mercenaries the Muscovite had to offer, for his alliance with his Polish Majesty who was ever without money. The bargain was struck, and Swedes and Saxons stood each on their side of the Düna. Ah 'twas a glad sight for old Dahlberg, who had gained many an honorable scar under both father and grandfather, to note what a chip of the old block the youth of nineteen had proved himself!

The ninth of July was the great day. In order that the Saxon generals, Steinau, Prince Ferdinand, and General Patkul, might not divine our crossing, we made great demonstrations in Riga and upon its other side.

I was with the King and his staff on a little knoll on the right bank of the river overlooking the action when the demonstration began. Before long we saw the Saxon infantry begin to move away from the works on the river-bank. The King was watching them through his glass.

"Good," says he, "they have taken the bait; all we need now is a good snowstorm to our backs as we had at Narva, and these fellows should scatter and run as did the Muscovite dogs."

I wet my finger as we do at sea and held it up to

catch the wind. There was little enough, but what there was was moving from the east, that is, from us to them.

"If all that Your Majesty wants," says I, "is a snowstorm, I think we might have one to our purpose or something well-nigh as good."

He took down his glass and turned to me with the same quizzical smile with which he would meet in the old days some proposal for a new frolic.

"Well, Klingspor," says he, "if you can make us a snowstorm, I give you a free hand."

Without more ado I left him and climbed down to where the scows were gathered for the transport of our army across the river. I gave my orders and set at the front of each scow, piled high with wet straw and manure, a gunner ready to each pile with his linstock lighted. When the Saxons were well away from the bank of the river and busy at that, we put off in our scows and were well halfway across the stream ere they caught our device. Back they came then pell-mell, but no sooner had they turned than we set fire to the straw in our scows and the thick, white, and sulphur-yellow smoke piled up before us like thunder-clouds. At first it was well nigh unbearable to us in the boats, for even their slow motion rolled it back into our faces; but in a few minutes the light air coming from the east sent it slowly along the surface of the water and up the other bank. The river was one mass of smoke, and not a Saxon gunner or musketeer but must fire at random, for not a boat could he see. Nor could we see either, any more than at Narva, but we had the less need for we sought nothing

but a landing, and as yet stood not to our arms. Thus we had a foot-hold on the bank, and the Saxons knew not when nor where. The instant we came to the bank we let down as gangplanks the upright wooden shields which had been intended to protect us from the Saxon bullets.

The King was among the first to set foot to ground. I landed close to him from the boat I was in. He clapped his hand upon my shoulder, and though he was coughing with the smoke that still hung on the river-bank, he commended my snowstorm, and in truth it went far to win us the battle.

Then he turned toward the boats from which the men were pouring. "Hurrah, my boys," he cried, "here we are at last, and God is sure to help us."

Therewith he took the lead of us drabants, mounted upon his gray horse, and rushed headlong on the batteries and breastworks scarce waiting for the rest of us to form and follow.

But before I go on with the fight I must relate one result of my snowstorm that we did not foresee. Even before the smoke went forward on the wind, we heard much shouting and jesting from boats near the one I was in. When the air cleared we saw wherefrom it rose. One of the boats had caught fire from the straw in her bow, and it was comical to see the frantic efforts of the men to pitch the burning straw overboard with their bayonets, and quench the fire with water bailed in their hats. From the next boat beyond came many scoffs and jests: that they should bore holes in the bottom to let the water in and quench the fire, that they should spit

on it, and such-like foolery. But even as these men were scoffing they paid more heed to the other boat than to their own, which was burning merrily behind their backs. We who saw it would not for the sake of the jest warn them of the fire, and by the time they felt it scorching their rumps, it was too late for them to do aught but to jump into the river, which they did amid the jeers and laughter of those whom they had been ridiculing a moment before. I think that not above five or six of them were drowned.

Steinau lost not a moment, but fell with the full shock of his horses upon our first line rapidly come ashore. Swedish soldiers and Saxon horsemen floundered together in the river, amid the blinding smoke, up to the waists of the men and bellies of the horses. Bright amid the smoke shone the flashing steel of Charles's raised sword leading us on to the charge. Slowly the boys in blue forced their way to the banks, 'mid the floating bodies of the dead, while the astonished Saxon horsemen withdrew to rally in a dry spot, situated between a wood and a swamp and protected by their artillery.

Rude and bloody turned the Swedish attack, our men following into the thickest of the enemy's foot, making with the clubs of their muskets a most dreadful slaughter. Twice the Duke of Courland, in leading the enemy, had his horse shot from under him, and thrice he penetrated to the midst of the royal guardsmen. At last, rendered well-nigh insensible by a musketeer pounding upon his unprotected head with the butt of his musket, the duke fell upon the ground, extremely overlaid, and his cuiras-

siers disentangled themselves with difficulty from the Swedish foot, dragging their leader with them in their precipitate flight. I would also here recount that some among the dexterous Saxon officers rallied repeatedly their scattered men, and pierced me some troops with those regiments; but after our repeated charges made upon them, they also were broken with the rest.

Before three hours were spent, Charles once more was victor. In the twelve short months he had humbled the powers of Denmark, Russia, and Saxony. Before us lay Poland, the royal republic Augustus had so constantly been urging to join in the war against Sweden.

Upon this occasion I will say that I got two pairs of pistols, a bundle of officer's linen, and lace, and a small fardel, containing several pieces of plate, and in a small cup two rings, as well as a fine cane.

Full joyous were we that our Charles had answered Louis's incessant and troublesome ambassador that

he had from one time to another been led to understand that the King of Poland was desirous of peace by the good offices of France. But that he had not wished to listen to it, as Augustus who had once so shamefully deceived us, could not find in us any belief. We regarded his word as faithless, purposing cunning malice and fraud, and it would detract from our glory if we should come to agreement with one who had so treacherously dishonored himself in regard to both treaty and covenant.

So we turned to Poland — Poland, whose friendship and connivance we needed, to chastise still further the great allies confronting us. In the days we were now to pass through, our young King was to receive his great schooling in all the arts of war and the science of military

leadership. With a king in Poland that suited his own fancy, Charles dared dream of crushing the great Muscovite Tsar. Mayhap a new Sobieski might rise. Augustus would ever prove too malicious and false for a trusted ally. Surely Swedeland could never return to Poland the newly conquered Courland, but from an humbled Muscovy, Poland could be more than generously repaid. Augustus must be punished. Was not our young King the agent of Divine justice — an avenger created for the chastisement of him who doeth evil? And were not the sacredness of his own word and the unlimited fidelity of his subjects the very corner-stones of human society?

Unfortunate indeed was Poland's geographical position and still more hopeless was her government. The Poles themselves scarce knew where the borders of their country began or ended. Neither mountains nor rivers bounded her provinces, nor strong men governed her wild and scattered hordes. Even the wild horses upon the steppes of Muscovy wheel and change their course by the neigh of their leader; but as for the Polish nobles, they tore at the very heart of their mother country, each ravenous for his own gain and profit. To gather them in under the protection of our own glorious banners was indeed like gathering the chaff after the scattering of the harvest winds. Confusion was not only tolerated, but the nobles seemed as it were, to our stranger eyes, to believe it necessary for the very support of what they termed their constitution in conformity with their national proverb, "Poland subsists by Anarchy."

Alas for themselves and their own country — they could not with benefit or profit, as the House of Hapsburg, "Divide et impera," when so many rulers took the place of one. And to hasten their inevitable destruction, the European conflict all around them was slowly but surely forging strong and united neighbors. Brandenburg-Prussia was cunningly aided by fortune, arriving at its unswerving purpose of becoming the great power of northern Germany — perhaps, in days to come, a great nation in Europe and the world. And here is the place for me to repeat the old adage I have heard which runs: —

Clarum regnum Polonorum
Est coelum Nobilitorum
Paradisus Judeorum
Et infernus rusticorum.[1]

As in the days of our King Charles XI, of blessed memory, William of Orange, Sir William Temple, and the great Elector of Brandenburg had stood against King Louis of France, so now Prince Eugene, John of Marlborough, and the Grand Pensionary Heinsius united against him. All six harbored hatreds against His Catholic Majesty for insults offered them, and the haughty monarch was secretly to rue his indiscretions.

Along the Rhine and in the Netherlands, camp-fires were now once more to be lit as we led the Swedish down through Samogotia and Lithuania. To gain still further support, the allies bound Hanover and Brandenburg

[1] Poland's lustrous kingdom is a heaven for the noblemen, a paradise for the Jews, and a hell for the peasants.

to them, the Papist councillors of the Emperor scrupling not to bestow honor upon these two heretical powers. For upon the House of Brandenburg was bestowed the long-coveted royal power, whereas the Duke of Hanover was created the ninth Elector of the Holy Roman Empire. And as the heretical powers of England and Holland were to provide moneys, so Prussia and Hanover were to provide well-drilled mercenaries "for all times to come."

The great War of the Spanish Succession had at last broken out. Suddenly through the chancelleries of Europe, to the consternation and despair of France, the news was spread of our glorious alliance with England and Holland and the new kingdom of Prussia. Great quantities of warm clothes and saltpetre were by Marlborough's orders to be supplied to our troops through the harbors of our Baltic provinces.

Austria, twice defended during the last century against the furious onslaughts of the infidels, whose hordes reached the very gates of Vienna, was now once more profiting by the gallant victories of her great Savoyan general. Full much had I heard of Emperor Leopold, now so near his end. Indeed he was not like any of the monarchs I had seen. All the splendor that surrounded him could not make up for the wolfishly protruding eye-teeth impeding his very speech. His long black beard and scented periwig, his languid gait and clothes of the Spanish cut, the dangling plumes of his hat and reddish hose, made indeed a strange impression upon my youthful years. While our state business went through the hands of his accursed Jesuit advisers, the Emperor

strangely preferred to occupy himself with his music and cards and strange curiosities or the pleasures of the chase, leaving his lands to be directed by the occult policy and crime of the black priests and Camarilla.

> Long had divided Poland felt the smart
> Of vast intrigues and politician's art.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ADVANCE AGAINST AUGUSTUS

But I am digressing from my subject and riding far afield from the plains of Poland, into which we were now to penetrate and which we were to cross and recross and cross again, ever victorious whatever might be the odds against us, until the very name of Sweden was to strike terror in the hearts of our enemies. Whatever were our losses, our Polish campaigns were to become a glad sport for our young monarch, in which he was to divert himself with many a pleasant and friendly field promenade, in which we would rout out our opponents. At times, while we lay in camp, our days would be those of lazy dogs until something lively once more broke cover; but more often did His Gracious Majesty make war in so pleasant a manner as made all the world fond of fighting under his conduct and royal standard.

The whole manner of thought and social habits of the Poles were in truth so at variance with ours that they could never come to an understanding with our King or our country. For an irresponsible state with citizens accountable to no one, it was well-nigh impossible to deal with, or come to any agreement with, an organized military force such as ours. Our Charles demanded other guaranties of peace than excuses, based on their confused laws. But whom to deal with? That was the question. This great republic of nobles divided

into many provinces and innumerable independent principalities, all misruled and disunified, was open to every enemy within and without, and closed to every friendly outside interposition. These countless nobles, of smaller or greater powers, headed by the great officers of state, the Cardinal-Primate, and, at the head of all, the selfish scheming Saxon, who had bought the crown, drifted practically without government. The nobility, numbering full more than a million, or a third of the population of our own dear country and its provinces, misrepresented the farcical political state. To us Swedes it seemed as if the lawless liberty of the individual, so different from what was found in all other European countries, became so great that indeed it swallowed up the rights of the community at large.

In the earliest days of our glorious Vasa kings, — yes, long before them, — this kingdom of Poland had been firmly ruled by mighty monarchs, one destined to sit on both of our thrones. But with the death of Sigismund Augustus those days passed, and the realm which had stretched from the Baltic to the Dniester and from the heart of Prussia to within a hundred and fifty miles of Moskowa's walls, shrank betimes into impotence and insignificance. That most blessed faith of the Reformation, which had spread so rapidly throughout all portions of this great realm, was to be undermined and persecuted by the accursed Jesuits. All the institutions blessing other states, such as the increase in the royal power and prerogatives, freedom of thought, and the growth and prosperity of trading, were not to be found in this distraught and sundered Polish land. Merchants

and laborers were all Jews, while the chamber of the chief nobles and that of the nuncios were ever to assemble for brawl and quarrel instead of peaceable legislation. A pernicious oligarchy in the eyes of our wise Piper! And to the rest of us the most inefficient government for a great state, of which we had ever heard mention.[1]

[1] The Polish Republic (as this country of nobles, sprung from the dissolution of a dual monarchy, was styled, in its own laws and international documents) bore much resemblance to the German state. In both of these almost decrepit social systems there existed, under an elective head with extensive real powers, an endless subdivision of all public posts, among a multitude of officials who cared little for their duties to the public. In Germany, however, the more powerful of these usurpers, under favoring circumstances, had been able to develop into princes with firmly established hereditary authority over larger or smaller territories, which were thus formed into states with a regular government, while the constitution of the country was reduced to an empty form. The Polish and Lithuanian magnates cherished the same aspirations; but before they had reached the same stage, the fulfillment was arrested by other powerful internal and external influences. In the meantime, the houses of Sapieha, Radziwill, Wisniowiecki, Potocki, and several others, had gained a position which to a certain extent might be compared to that of the German princely houses, before they had consolidated their territories through the introduction of primogeniture and the transformation of nobles liable to service into subjects in a political sense. Polish magnates were more than mere proprietors of noble birth and enormous wealth. They held brilliant courts in their castles, with retinues of poorer noblemen who waited on their tables, managed their estates and supported their policy with votes or arms as was needed. They had their own regiments of Cossacks, Wallachians or German mercenaries; they built fortresses and provided themselves with cannons. The Republic, like the Holy Roman Empire, was fairly on the way to become "a conglomerate of smaller principalities." The sovereign noble "people" (the great body of the serfs was designated by another coarser epithet) exercised their rights less in the Parliaments than at the Diets. In so far the Republic had the appearance of a union or confederacy, to use modern terms, which are little appropriate. Officially they always spoke of a "union" between the two "lands," or "nations": the monarchy Poland, or the "Crown," and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Between them were various dissimilarities in laws and administration, but in international respects there was little difference. The Kingdom was said to consist of two "provinces" — Great Poland (in the north) and Little Poland (in the south). — H. HJÄRNE: *Karl XII*, pp. 119–122.

How to grapple with our enemy in his high office of Elector of Saxony, and not as King of Poland, was no easy task. We were not warring with Poland, but must attempt to enter that territory without bringing the hornets' nest of nobles about our ears. Against the will and constitution of his Polish subjects had Augustus done us mighty harm and commenced his treacherous inroads into our Livonian province.

The rivalry of the two great families of the Sapieha and the Oginski, dividing the supremacy of Lithuania, came to the solution of the vexed question, and full quickly did Charles espouse the cause of the noble Sapiehas, announcing by courier the good reason of his bold advance to the Cardinal-Primate and such rulers as could be found. Nor did our gallant King omit to mention the necessity of electing a new king who might be more trusted as a good neighbor. Not alone had Augustus broken his oath to the Republic, but he had trodden under foot its liberties. It was thus in the interests of the Most Serene Republic to elect another king as soon as possible.

Forward marched our armies, deep into Courland, through Brauske, Grobin, and to the castle of Würgen, while Mittau surrendered to Mörner. On the new year's snow we broke up from Goldingen and passed into Poland, encamping at last at Biolowice, after marching up to our waists in mud and icy water. As we pitched our tents, the frozen water in our cloaks made them as stiff and brittle as the bark of a white birch.[1]

[1] 6000 oxen, 60,000 barrels of beer, 1000 kegs of corn brandy, and 60,000 kegs of fish were sent over by the Swedish government for the consumption of the army.

Full often have I been questioned by idle busybodies whether His Majesty had not, during the many years in which I had followed and perforce observed him, yielded to the charms of some woman. But I have given short shrift to such fool prattle: as Satan has filled the hearts and thoughts of some of us, aye, and the greatest too, with the constant lust after woman's flesh, so in others the Highest God seems to have obliterated, as it were, these base desires, and the softest lips and warmest seductions prevail not in inflaming their imagination. Through all his stormy youth and early manhood, our Gracious King did never to my knowledge violate those vows of chastity which he gave as a lad in the Stockholm chapel before receiving his first Holy Communion. Never have I seen a man over whom woman had less influence. He would close his eyes in sleep on the shoulder of the poorest companion-in-arms, but never upon the bosom of a woman however beautiful. The sweetness of her caresses, the soft yielding of her form, the intoxicating perfume of her close breath, entered not into the world of adventure he was destined to seek. Never once did he alter his course or delay his intended actions for a woman's sake. Seldom did she even, with the exception of those in his own royal household, enter his thoughts. His dogs were far dearer to his heart, and with his horses no woman could bear comparison.

Now this exclusion in her world-dominion was unknown to the amorous Augustus. He judged rather from his own enslaved life of the influence and havoc of women. His army being scattered after the battle of the Düna, not stopping their flight until within the borders

of his own Electorate, Augustus was hard pressed. From Peter there was scant hope of speedy assistance, and, like a true German, he was more willing to be saved than to save himself. So he bethought himself of sending the loveliest of graces, the mother of two of his own three hundred and sixty-five children,[1] the gifted Countess Aurora von Königsmarck, to employ her charms in bringing about peace and inducing King Charles to advance no farther into Poland. No fairer ambassadress ever went upon diplomatic errand, or through wiles might feel surer of victory. No minister was as capable of success. Of a great and powerful family, of noble Swedish birth, she sought our camp under

[1] The child later to be known as the famous Maréchal de Saxe was then but a boy of eight. At the age of fourteen he is described as follows: —

"Portrait of a certain 'Seigneur'

"Represent to yourself a *seigneur* 14 years old, large and strong and well-grown, with lively eyes, beautiful hair and passable manners. Eagerly fond of all kinds of animals and especially of hunting. Extremely taken up by his pleasures, for which he conceives an inexpressible 'tendresse,' incapable of leaving them without tears in the eyes, well fitted for all bodily exercises in which he shows more strength than address or discernment. — To be unable at his age either to write or to read is a very serious 'factum,' and taken the qualities of mind which he for several years had shown, he would probably make but slow progress in these matters in the future. He is so full of life and mischief, he can hardly stay still in bed. When he wakes up, he is dressed; but as soon as he considers that now must he study, he does everything that lies in his power to delay that fatal moment. To bring this about he has a thousand '*rares secrets*,' which all are conceived in his imagination; if he is shown upon a table, books, paper and the *attirail funeste* of studies, he is transformed to a powerless, immovable crushed body, who can utter no word for the advancement of science; he merely yawns, spits twenty times in succession, and if there then remains anything of his voice, he employs it to ask questions of his body-servant or call for the lackey. Finally the hour strikes, and he finds himself closeted with his *Précepteur;* thereupon he is seized by complete lethargy; there merely remains of him *un jeune homme flambé*, who laments the inexorable fate of human beings, who must be bereft of so many hours, which might otherwise be hallowed to pleasure."

the specious pretence of obtaining the pardon of her brother-in-law, Count Charles Lewenhaupt, who, despite the letters of recall to Sweden, had remained in the service of King Augustus after the outbreak of hostilities.

How shall a poor soldier's pen describe one who at this time was the toast of all Europe? Though the grace of her body and the beauty of her face were extraordinary, they were still inferior to the brilliancy of her soul. Everything in her seemed in the greatest harmony. The color upon her cheeks and the shining of her eyes were still, in this her thirtieth year, as those of a beauty of twenty. Her thick black hair lay in waves around the oval face. Her forehead was high and of a lofty calm. The delicate curve of her dark eyebrows would have inspired poets. Arrows, which none had been able to resist, were darted from her black eyes, fiery and radiant. Even the nose was a masterpiece of the Creator. The mouth was small, the lips like blood, the teeth white and regular. Her bosom was high, her waist was slender. In one word, all about her must call forth admiration and desire in the least impassioned of men. And in this fair casket was the mind no less fair a jewel. Her rich and cultivated genius had captivated many of the most brilliant men of Europe. Equally well could she banter or argue in the Swedish, Latin, French, German, or Italian tongue. By her talent for painting, song, music, and the art of poetry, as well as her sound scientific attainments, did she charm whoever discoursed with her, whether amidst her nuns at Quedlinburg, or under the flashing crystals of the court chandeliers. She flamed

like a very meteor down among the tents of the Swedish camp.

The fair ambassadress was not unknown to our King, for already four years earlier had she sent him of her verses. Moreover "Madame Fama," as a writer of the time declared, "had had much to say about her own and her brother's sad and strange fortunes." By virtue of her elevated position as well as through her noble connections, she was, shortly after her long and dangerous voyage, received with honor by Piper as well as others of the great statesmen and soldiers in our camp. Having completely charmed them by the complaisance of her manner, as well as her honest desire to avert a great and unnecessary conflict, she begged to be taken to the King's lodgings for an audience. Great was her surprise and chagrin when she learned of the mean tent in which the royal lad was quartered, with boards next the ground and thatched on top and scarcely tempered from the frightful cold without by a pile of red-hot cannon-balls.

Unable to reach the King, who positively denied her audience, Aurora thereupon sent him the following epigram: —

À la table des dieux, Mercure louait fort
Le jeune monarque du Nord
En parlant des héros qui regnent sur la terre;
Mars surtout vantait les lauriers
Qu'il a remportés à la guerre;
Mais Jupiter fut des premiers
À faire remarquer sa bonté, sa clémence,
Sa piété, sa tempérance,
Si rare parmi les guerriers;
Minerve applaudissait sans cesse

À sa prudence, à sa sagesse;
Ce roi-là, dit Momus, ne sera pas un sot!
Enfin chacun des dieux, discourant à sa gloire,
Le placait par avance au temple de Mémoire.
Mais Vénus et Bacchus n'en dirent pas un mot.

These flattering lines bringing no response from his stony heart, the countess contrived, through her winsome ways and by granting minor favors, to have placed in the tent of our monarch, while he was busily engaged in inspecting the various quarters of the army, a miniature well portraying her exquisite features. Silent as a Carthusian, Charles handed the ivory to the page Klinckowström for *his* delectation. It was but a few days afterwards that Aurora gave Piper the following for our master, with all manner of promises and gifts, begging him to hand it to the King, and this he did: —

Charles, votre constance, à qui tout est possible,
Vient d'achever mille faits inouis;
Pour vous ravir le nom de guerrier invincible,
Mille projets se sont évanouis.
Mais d'ou vient, jeune roi, qu'avec tant de mérite
Vous avez peu de vrai bonheur?
Partout, environné d'honneur,
Aucun plaisir ne marche à votre suite!
Certès, votre bel œil, votre taille divine,
Mérite un prix plus doux et plus charmant.
Pardonnez mon audace, en secret je devine
Qu'un bel héros soit devenir amant.
S'il est une beauté qui peut par tendresse
Charmer le plus grand des mortels,
Nous lui dressons des autels,
Ouvrez les bras, recevez la déesse!

But Charles remained obdurate as adamant. Even a goddess should not fold him in her arms.

Though Rehnsköld perchance was more gallant, he

proved himself no more successful in procuring for her the desired interview. Taking matters into her own hands, the countess decided to waylay the King. To this effect she stationed her equipage upon the road by which the King must perforce return to camp, and awaited his coming in her most seductive toilet. The monarch, upon perceiving her, struck his spurs deep into the flanks of his horse and rode at full gallop past countess, equipage, servants and all, as if he were leading his drabants into battle. But his hand grasped his hat instead of his glittering sword, and in passing her he made a deep *reverenzia*.

Defeated at last, the fair Aurora wrote to her former Saxon lover: —

> Je l'ai vu ce héros, que tout le monde admire
> Et je conviens que c'est un demi-dieu;
> Honneurs, gloire, vertus, le respect qu'il inspire,
> Pour en douter ne laissent aucun lieu;
> La victoire le prouve, et le gloire l'atteste,
> Mais parmi des exploits si beaux
> Après tant de fameux travaux
> Vit-on jamais un vainqueur plus modeste?
> Consolez-vous, Auguste, et plaignez moins vos pertes,
> Charles de Suède est un roi vertueux;
> Il ne triomphe pas de vos peines secrètes,
> En conquerant d'un orgueil fastueux,
> *Vous vaincrez son grand cœur, en vous vainquant vous-même.*
> Quittez votre animosité
> Loin d'ici fausse vanité!
> Son amitié vaut plus qu'un diadème.

Thus Charles had by his constancy and virtue won another battle over his Polish Majesty, greater in the eyes of his good field-confessor than the victory of the Düna. And that his soldiers should no more be similarly

tempted by lesser graces, the King issued the stern command to have driven away out into the snows the great number of lewd women, who had slipped in among the troops and introduced libertinism and disorder; and before they reluctantly took their departure, they were collected in a great wailing mob and compelled to fall upon their knees and listen to a long Protestant sermon, while their penitent lovers, with uncovered heads, stood sighing all about them.

There were to be no regiments of rags, nor in fact any women in the camp but such as were known to the provosts as the wives of the soldiers, who were necessary for washing linen and dressing victuals.

In order to draw a comparison, I cannot here refrain from digressing. I would point out how different from the Spartan self-denial of my hero was the life of his adversary, his Polish Majesty.

Some years later than Aurora's visit to our camp, I had a particular opportunity at which to see things, when I was present at the fine fête which Count Fleming gave in honor of Augustus, and therefore am I the forwarder to relate them. His Polish Majesty ordered six whole regiments to march into the fields outside of Dresden. On the heights were planted cannon, and everything was so arranged that the King and his court might witness the play as it were a genuine engagement. They wheeled and attacked and retreated; all their movements in short were something terribly merry, as no one thereby came to harm. The King as well as the Countess Dönhof and the Lithuanian General Potzki's wife, both of whom were dressed lightly as amazons, as

well as a great throng of gentlemen, showed themselves to horse. The other ladies were in equipages drawn by six horses.

After the combat had ended, the King Augustus seated himself at a table under a great tent, accompanied by the finest ladies and gentlemen. Two more tables were decked in other tents for the other cavaliers and strangers. During the meal the music of the cannons, the trumpets, and the drums was heard at pleasing intervals. A jolly play began after the meal was ended. The tables were not taken away, but the soldiers who had done best were allowed to fall upon the remains of the feast, while the King and his noble party looked on. In the bread Count Fleming had ordered that a thousand hard gulden should be hidden. The trumpets blew as to storming, and the meritorious soldiers standing in battle column fell upon the loaves and what was left on the table in one great fighting cursing mob. Great was the ensuing delight and pleasure of the Court. Thereupon everything was cleared away, and the injured soldiers were carried off amidst much mirth and laughter, and dancing went on until seven. Count Fleming thereby emptied so many glasses to the health of his guests that he fell over quite drunken.

The King also seemed no longer sober, although he showed no conduct unsuitable to his majesty. I noticed howbeit the martyrdom of a certain chamberlain who was then on duty. He stood for a long time behind the royal chair with a glass of water, but was so weak in his knees and shaking on his feet that he swayed as a ship at sea, imperilling with each movement the contents of

his glass. Count Fleming, managing to rise, was beside himself with joy. As the King would leave, he fell familiarly upon his neck. "Brother," he said, "I renounce my friendship for you, if you leave." The Countess of Dönhof did, however, her best to protect her royal lover from such indecencies. But Fleming was far too happy to satisfy himself with being thus thrust aside — he desired to enfold the countess within his loving arms. "You little w——", he said, "you are surely a good little w——." To such compliments the countess was well accustomed, whenever Count Fleming was sufficiently drunk. She therefore answered with loud laughter and merely endeavored to keep him away from the King.

During the return both the King and the Countess of Dönhof fell off their horses; but chamberlains and lackeys were soon busied scraping the dirt and muck from off their fine clothes. Praised be God, they took no harm!

Again, and no less apt to point the contrast, there is the quaint story of the fair Turkish slave Fatima. She was one of four received as booty by Alexander Erskin, the others named Roosia, Eisia, and Emine, and all said to be of great beauty after the oriental fashion, which I have no gusto for myself, though I saw somewhat of it in our evil days. But of the four that I speak, they were taken in the year 1686, when the imperial troops entered Ofen, and Fatima was given by her new master to the Countess Aurora. She, indeed, like a girl with a new doll, — for I will think it done more in sport than sober Christian zeal, — must needs have her heathen

slave-girl (to her everlasting welfare) baptized into the Christian church. To the German church in Stockholm we all flocked, not knights and nobles alone, but royalty no less, for there were Queen Ulrica Eleanore, Princess Hedvig Sophia, and Charles himself, then the young Prince, who, in company with the greatest nobles of the realm stood godfather, and seven noblewomen godmothers. Thus to the eminent satisfaction of the Countess Aurora, and to the blessing of the dazed Fatima, the much-admired slave became a Christian by the name of her godmother, Maria Aurora. Such was the only link, and a wry one, between the Countess and my royal master when she came to him in our camp, that he and she had stood together in the Temple of the Lord, and pledged themselves to watch over the Christian education of a Turkish slave whom men called beautiful. And if the education she received at the hands of the Countess and Augustus be called Christian she might better have been left to heathen manners. For King Augustus one day, leaving the couch of the godmother, came upon the slave in the anteroom in such trim as further to arouse the appetite which in him there was no sating, and no little to the renown (at the time) of this remarkable monarch, he left in the same day both the mistress and the slave with child.

But to return. Though Charles cared but little for women, whether their virtue were unto them as a precious jewel or merely an article of trade, his heart beat warmly for his dogs, with whom he preferred to share his simple soldier's bed. Thus he now writes to his royal sister: —

Pompey and Sniffaround tender their dutiful services to Madame Mignon. Their portraits I intended to send by the Prince of Saxony, but in the haste they were left behind us at Würgen. However, I shall try to procure them. Otherwise, I have had a great misfortune, for Cæsar has quite suddenly died in this foreign land, so that of his kind now only Turk is alive. I am glad the lady-in-waiting now at last has succeeded in the consummation of her marriage. That my sister will take unto her the Child of Nuniers, is also very pleasing to me. I beg pardon if I this time have detained my dear heart too long.

My sister's humble true brother and servant,

CAROLUS.

Amen.

And now that interminable correspondence between our King and the Polish Republic was well under way, and the endless succession of conferences, deputations, and diets was about to begin. Strange though it may seem, our country as well as Saxony was at peace with Poland and remained so through the many months during which the sad necessities of war caused us to burn and pillage and ravage the Polish lands. It taxed indeed the wise Piper to his utmost, as well as the secretary, Hermelin, who had been called to our chancellery from his chair of History. Through his wise insight, statesmanship, and most excellent mastery of the Latin of diplomacy, he was to prove himself, yea, even a match for the crafty old Cardinal-Primate of Poland.

It certainly was no easy matter for King Charles to decide from his camp the many troublous affairs pertaining to the government of Sweden and its provinces, as well as direct the entire course of our military proceedings. Sorely tired in body and mind were Swedish

couriers for years to come, shuttling across Europe in order to bring King Charles's orders and decisions back and forward to the despairing and powerless councillors in Stockholm. Their duty was clearly to provide men and money; beyond that they were but to listen to the royal orders and good pleasure. Alas, they were often difficult to decipher, for the ink-horn would ofttimes be upset over the order, and as the horses were waiting, the page became blotted and well-nigh illegible. But the contents, so constantly written by his own hand, were full clear and to the point, whether in his own dear Swedish tongue with its ringing words and fresh expressions, or even merry jests in lighter vein, or whether by force of necessity written in the German or Latin.

Wise old Bengt Oxenstjerna, who for so many years had been our greatest statesman, no longer daring to write the King personally, was, however, constantly putting fleas in his ear. He would write lengthily to Piper or Hermelin or the others nearest the King and pour out his experienced heart in all matters of policy affecting our Swedish state. Now before his death, in his eightieth year, he sent us to camp, as it were, his last will and testament, begging Sweden send her troops to aid the naval powers and desist from further progress in Poland. We should, he prayed, reef our sails until the great storm in Europe had passed. But Charles heeded this no more than does the wind the dead leaves of autumn.

Like unto two skilful fencers, feinting, thrusting, and parrying, so did Charles and the Cardinal-Primate move through their diplomatic negotiations as to the unhappy

throne of Poland. The Cardinal Michael Étienne Radziejowski was surely one of the most remarkable personages of his day. He was a son of the traitor to his country, Hieronymus Radziejowski. By virtue of his high position, as well as the rare qualities of his mind, his influence was mighty. But even to the fox could he have taught a useful lesson in cunning. He was a great statesman — rich, learned, and brave; artful, intriguing, and imperious. He had long played, with burning zeal, the most important part in the many strifes of his divided country. His untrustworthiness made him even more dangerous as friend than as foe, the more especially when the gold jingled sweetly in his ears. The great King Jean Sobieski had made him Bishop of Varmia, but that was long ago, and he now was Archbishop of Gnesen as well as Primate of the Kingdom and President of the Diet. At his arrival in the Senate, I have seen him preceded by a proud prelate on horseback, carrying before him a cross of gold which the same prelate holds loftily behind his throne as he seats himself beside the King; and at his exit a senator once more goes before his equipage, while the Cardinal holds the staff in his hand, kissing it for no one excepting the King. The King receives him in the antechamber, and unto the Papal Nuncio alone does he render visit. A proud and mighty man indeed, meet to cope with our Charles!

Great had been his rage when Augustus, after the election of the Prince of Conti, bought the throne; for Radziejowski had been deep in the counsels of France and his pockets were bulging with Louis's gold, seeing that he could not place Jacques Sobieski in his father's seat.

Madame la Cardinalesse, as we called his sweet dove, had however now brought about a reconciliation between her lover and Augustus — and he was once more craftily awaiting the developments brought about by Sweden. Now, mayhap, he believed the time had come once more to open a road along which Jacques Sobieski might move to seize the throne, and he himself govern it absolutely.

Before admitting the Polish ambassadors to an audience, Charles had catechized irreligious soldiers in the Lutheran Church, the officers listening attentively, whereupon the entire infantry received Holy Communion before being dismissed for drill in the great enclosure of the churchyard. His soldiers being thus spiritually edified and thereafter set to their duties, Charles entered his tent in order to give the promised audience.

There had been much difficulty in arranging this as demanded by the Polish ambassadors, for they had deemed necessary that the Republic be given the title of "Most Serene"; that the King send his equipage with some of his senators to fetch them; that the King's guard upon their arrival in camp should present arms, the standards be unfolded and drums beaten; that the two ambassadors, clothed with the authority of the Senate, should be admitted covered before the King; and that it should be permitted them to remain seated after three deep reverences. To these conditions our King had answered that Sweden had never given the Republic other title than "Illustrious" except during the vacancy of the throne; that he had no equipage with him in his campaigns; that the only senator he had with him

would have to stay by his person; but that he would despatch for their escort a lieutenant-general. As they were all sent unto him in quality of ambassadors, they might, for all he cared, remain covered.

General Lieven now introduced the splendid retinue, consisting of more than five hundred nobles, more gorgeously arrayed than birds of paradise. General Posse received them before the great tent, erected for this grand occasion, the lovely blue and yellow silks of our banners fluttering the while in the spring breeze and the drums and trumpets sounding their joyous notes. Charles was seated, wearing the costume he loved so well and which he never varied, except to renew when the old garments were worn out. There was the long blue jacket, its brass buttons closing high up to the simple neck-cloth, breeches of buckskin in the long riding-boots with their huge spurs, and the simple upturned hat with galloons scarce fit for the rank of a corporal. One of his long doeskin-cuffed gloves grasped the hilt of his huge sword. Around him sat Piper and his generals.

Hardly could the senators conceal their astonishment, for not one owned to lackey or stable-boy more simply dressed.

At their first reverence, His Majesty uncovered; at the second, he rose; but when, at the third, Count Lepski began to enumerate the titles of Sweden's King, he covered himself once more and made sign to the ambassadors to do likewise.

It was Piper who replied to the ambassadors, giving them assurance of his master's friendship for the Republic and concern for its welfare; he further eloquently

reasoned that the King of Sweden came not as an aggressor but as the one much wronged.

Beyond the royal appointment of special commissioners by our King and endless accusations on both sides, the ambassadors did not reach; nor did aught else come of the constant notes that passed between us and the Cardinal-Primate, nor yet from the audiences of the old sly-fox with both King Charles and Piper. It all wearied our King, who saw little usefulness or result from discussion so long as Augustus remained upon the throne.

And our King's heart was likewise hot within him with rage when he learned the treacherous assault upon Hummerhjelm's advance guard and the cutting down of his brave troop. When we reached the fatal spot on our southward march, we dug up each Swedish body and washed it and clothed it and gave it decent church burial, the bugles blowing the beloved Swedish airs.

This befell the while William of England lay dead and Queen Anne ascended his throne, but we thought more of the fate of our comrades of yesterday as we marched, those early summer days, until we triumphantly entered the city of Warsaw, where 'mid the astonished population we all knelt down in the great market-place and gave thanks unto the Most High God. On the following morning, 'mid the joyous acclamations of the army, King Charles took pleasure in recounting to his generals as they rode across the fields of Praga, outside the city gates, how his grandfather, of glorious memory, had there, with Fredrik William the Great, Elector of Brandenburg, defeated and routed the Polish army in the three days' battle.

THE FIELD OF KLISZOW

Southerly towards Cracow, by the heights of Kliszow Church, we at last found Augustus with his army full thirty thousand strong, consisting of his best Saxon regiments, the crown army of Poland, and a mighty host of Wallachian horsemen. Eager as a hound from the leash, Charles would at once lead the attack; and had it not been for the ruse of the wise Piper, who reminded our master that in but two days we should once more have the ninth of July, the anniversary of the glorious battle of the Düna, we should at once have rushed into the fray with our scant seven thousand men. To our unspeakable joy the columns of Mörner and Stenbock, though worn and spent, and bearing with them many a litter of sick, reached us the following day, swelling our ranks to twelve thousand able fighters.

Never did our Charles prove himself a greater general than on this battlefield. The advantage lay all with the enemy we were about to attack, for they were surrounded on three sides with impassable morasses and on the fourth commanded from their elevation the country around them. Not a piece of artillery did we have with which to match their forty-eight fine cannon. But all this did not disconcert King Charles, who remained firm in his resolve to attack upon his day of good fortune. Augustus and Fleming and Schulenburg and Steinau were all arrayed against him, as well as Lubomirski, the general of the crown army. What glory to defeat them! His Majesty reasoned that though his troops were hungry and footsore, like starving dogs they would bite the better, and on the morrow we should hear our glad battle-cry, "With the help of God!" Not only was

our hero to prove himself a great general of cavalry, but the great commander and soldier who understood, as not even Prince Eugene or Marlborough, how to employ to their greatest mutual advantage our foot-soldiers and horsemen. Indeed, he showed himself a master of tactics.

With all to win and no odds for us, the battle commenced as the bells rang the hour of noon. Two short hours after saw our troops so disposed through Charles's rapid and brave decisions that we might manœuvre on equal terms with the enemy. Not an opportunity had been lost of duping him or gaining a better position. I wished in my heart old Dahlberg or Stuart had been there, that their hearts might have swelled with pride to see how the fledgling had learned to fly. Ah, it was a gallant sight to see our horsemen charging in their long elkskin coats, most of them merely with the breast cuirass, the King having forbidden it for the back — all, even the officers, with their carbines hanging over their shoulders.

The officers of the foot wore their blue parade jackets, the pockets trimmed with gold galloons as were the broad lapels. Their stockings were dark blue and the shoe-buckles gilded. Their silver collars carried the royal initials set in palm leaves. Among the finest were the drabants, as every man in the regiment bore the rank of officer. Their hats and coats were covered with gold galloons, and the straps of their carbines were encased in blue silk. They wore long, collared gloves, and high top boots with black polished spurs. Gayest of all were the trumpeters and drummers, each one carrying over a hundred feet of gold galloons upon his coat, and

CHARLES XII

Engraved by Fritzsch in 1743

the players on the hautboy in their yellow coats with blue linings and shining silver galloons.

Against these beautiful troops shone the red and gold of the Saxons and the many-colored fur-trimmed silks which the Polish noblemen wore over their cuirasses. Around their waists shone golden girdles; from their heads waved the white plumes of their high furred caps. Their wide trousers were thrust into yellow morocco boots; bright sabres, lances and pistols shone from their hands and girdles. The noblest among them wore leopard and bearskins over their armor. On their helmets and the armor of their backs were fastened wings of the stork and the crane.

This gay army was drawn up on a low round hill to our left front. Immediately before us, where we stood, also on a little hill which was covered with birches, was a deep swamp, or rather a little sluggish stream with very heavy marshy banks. The King and I with him and a few others rode on the right wing of our force, and there we saw a whole array of the Saxons, drawn out with one wing on the hill and the other against the town, the swamp in front. Directly between their centre and ours, we posted our battery on the height among the birches. The King, as I have said, wished to attack the day before, but had taken Count Piper's advice, which he found to be well taken, for by waiting until noon before our advance, we caught the slothful dogs completely off their guard as we heard afterward. The soldiers and many of the officers were taking their siesta, and Augustus himself and his staff officers were sitting down to a magnificent dinner which we found after the

action scarcely touched on the table in his sumptuous tent.

We pushed sturdily forward on the left wing at the narrow part of the stream, the more easily for that the Saxon gunners, seemingly with sleep still in their eyes, were but poor marksmen. Soon, however, the Polish cavalry dashed down to oppose us, and I think they would have given us a stiff fight for it, and perhaps have prevented us in the end, had the King not bethought him of the device of supporting us with small divisions of infantry among the squadrons of cavalry. Of these the best marksmen and musketeers stood in the rear rank while the front rank with pikes offered a hard nut for the Polish cavalry to crack. This broke their charges and the marksmen hurried their retreat. As they scoured back into the army behind, it in turn broke. So much I saw for myself of this battle. Those in other parts of the field told us afterward that they had a harder time than we, and indeed the Life Guards would have been cut to pieces by the Saxon horse, which far outnumbered them, had they not formed a square and opposed their fronts to the enemy on all sides.

Ere the sun had set, it was all over, and Charles entered the Saxon camp amid the sounds of trumpets and timbals announcing the victory, even as the Saxons had blown upon our first approach. Full a thousand of Augustus's finest troops entered the Swedish regiments—two thousand were killed and another thousand seemed worthless prisoners, scarce fit for aught else but slaughter. In the morass we hit upon not only all the baggage, which was there mired, but also King Augustus's mag-

nificent equipage with his gray mules, and plate and military chest with one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and the fine wagons belonging to the Muscovite envoy. In the same morass we took up to five hundred women, and some with new-born sucking babes, and some fine ladies with which we wot not what to do or how to proceed. Indeed, this portion of the Saxon camp looked unto us like the summer fair with its many merchants' booths.

To these the King came where they were collected together, and removing his hat with his usual gallantry, stood holding it under his arm as he addressed them.

"Ladies," says he, "your gracious company is one which we rude soldiers in our campaign know not how to entertain, for we have neither court nor music, nor theatre, nor any form of entertainment with which to divert you. We have no saloons for evenings at ombre, piquet, or chess, nor yet *le grand tric-trac*. For billiards, we have naught but musket-balls and round shot. In a word, then, we must part; you, to your peaceful homes, we, to our campaigns and battles."

He caused them to be conducted with all possible safeguards that evening to the borders of Silesia, and for that Augustus and his soldiers were mightily grateful.

Then we sang a sad *Te Deum*, for we too had suffered a great loss. In the very first cavalry charge of the battle, the King's brother, the Duke of Holstein, had received a round shot through the reins from a falconet, so that he soon gave up the ghost in the shade of some young oaks whither we had carried him. A sad duty

fell to the Holstein marshal, who carried to Sweden this letter of which I have yet a copy in my index book:—

MOST GRACIOUS PRINCESS:

DEAREST SISTER, —

I cannot omit my duty on the occasion of the Marshal Goertz' now faring forth from here, to pay my respects to Mon Cœur with this letter.

I fear that my earlier letters, despatched since we left Warsaw, are never arrived. And now I am heartbroken at the report I must make to you. We have suffered a most painful loss, which I well know, God pity me, will cause Mon Cœur an overwhelming sorrow. I know not how I well shall write; I only beg my sister will not permit this sorrow to take too great hold upon her, but will like a Christian accept it, and rest content as it is after the pleasure of the good and highest God, who does everything with us here below according to His gracious will and turns everything to our good. I can not and dare not detain Mon Cœur in this sorrowful affair, but only wish that our Lord, the mighty God, may console, strengthen, preserve and help Mon Cœur in passing through this, which is my firm consolation, and which I hope without doubt.

With this I recommend myself to your continuous grace and beg Mon Cœur to assure herself that until her dying day, I am and shall remain her humblest and most faithful brother and servant,

CAROLUS.

The day after this glorious battle, the King had buried all the dead, excepting alone the duke. To honor the memory of these brave people, the King and his generals assisted at the obsequies and ordered a double discharge of all the forty-eight conquered cannon and the entire musketry. The King then ordered a brass coffin made for the corpse of the duke, which had been embalmed. When it had been carried into a hall,

Charles, according to the established custom of our country, repaired thither in the company of the Duke of Mecklenburg, Count Piper, and his principal generals. The hall was illuminated with many candles. Thereupon the body was deposited upon a bed, three feet high, under a canopy of black velvet, laced and fringed with silver. His Majesty and the lords took a sad farewell of the old playmate and brother-in-arms, whereupon they laid him once more in his coffin and closed its lid so that it might safely be given in the custody of his minister for its long northern journey.

At the outset, as I have said, we had no advantage to our side, but not so thought Fleming, who wrote to his master after the battle, in a letter which long after came to my hand: —

> We had, in one word, every advantage upon our side. My horse was shot under me and was crushing my intestines in, rolling and kicking on top of me, when to my great joy I was dragged out. When at last I regained my feet, not a man of the Polish army could be seen, and shortly thereafter the entire right wing of the Saxons had followed in their traces.

The Lord God indeed gives the victory, when one does bravely what one ought to do.

CHAPTER IX

CRACOW AND THORN

THE road to Poland's second capital, Cracow, lay now as good as open to us, for Augustus, his heart bursting with chagrin, had fled still farther south to Sendomir, where he was fain to call the Polish nobles together to press hard upon them national action against Charles. But see how fruitless was such a course. Letters and messengers and manifestoes flew back and forth between Cardinal, assemblies and deputations on the side of the Poles, and Augustus, aye, for months to come, and in reply from Charles and our chancellery was returned the firm demand that Augustus should go. We insisted that the Polish Republic should call a national assembly in order to renounce all faith to Augustus, and thereupon proceed with the election of a new monarch. But this sorely wounded the pride and feeling of independence of the haughty nobles who resented that we as a foreign power should interfere with the relations of the Republic to its Ruler. Forsooth, there was some reason to their argument.

Our army and our victories were however soon to produce a great confederation amid the dissatisfied, and split the Republic in such a manner that faction upon faction would be weaned away from Augustus and leave him in a sorry plight. The Parliament he called, though hot and angry were its words, and furious the denuncia-

tions of our brave troops, ended in naught but disagreement, wrangling, recriminations, and bloody attacks. Corpses in place of resolutions were the results of each sitting, and upon this occasion poor Lipski, who had been so fine when Charles had received their deputation, was cut into several bits by his friends.

Stenbock was sent ahead to demand of the magistrates entry into the city, and great was his chagrin when he found the bridge pulled up, the great gate barred and bolted, and the citizens, like Peeping Toms, looking out through the cracks upon us. Leaving well enough alone, Stenbock rode around into one of the suburbs, where he gave himself to crying out bravely for the commandant, who soon came running upon the wall and entered into parley with him, asserting that city and castle had been left in his safe keeping by King Augustus and for that he could not give them over.

As it were in the twinkling of an eye, King Charles was there upon them, where they were wasting their breath. As the commandant, out of either simplicity or all too great foolishness, had opened a crack of the gate, — for he wanted perhaps to see who the newcomer might be, — he received a stinging stroke of Charles's riding whip over the snout he had been so rash as to stick out, and at the same moment the King rushed in, Stenbock and the rest of us putting spurs to our horses behind him. The watch threw their muskets upon the ground, and when the only poor fellow who had any spirit, namely a lieutenant of artillery, would have stuck his lighted fuse to a cannon, the King tore it out

of his hand and put it out in the seat of the poor lieutenant's breeches.

Thus Cracow was taken, but little occurred there or in the neighborhood except the coming of the Holy Pope's messenger, the Dominican Levesi, who called Charles a "filius delectus" (most strange did this sound to our ears), and assured our King that His Holiness was charmed with the peace-loving mind with which His Majesty conducted his wars. Hermelin attended to the fellow's needs and cleared him of his empty words, for we soldiers had but little time for the black crow's cawing.

Two events at this time cast us, however, into great consternation. The first of them was that the old citadel, with its brick walls and turrets, high up upon the rock, caught fire, either through accident or malice. While we watched the conflagration, there issued out from certain chambers, which we ascertained were dungeons and prison-cells, the most horrible shrieks and yells. This was but reasonable, for the inmates were slowly being roasted unshriven to death, and being Catholics, they liked not this method of procedure into the other world. We routed out of St. Nicholas's Church and a nearby cloister a flock of monks, and forced them to mount upon ladders till they reached the gratings of the cells, from where they thus could happily expedite the burning prisoners into another life.

The second event was a sad one, for our dear King had an unexpected fall. Stenbock had, upon the orders of the King, formed a company, consisting of impoverished Polish noblemen who were alert and good riders,

which might be employed to procure intelligence and go with letters. They must needs now present themselves before the King and ride as they were accustomed, bellowing as hard as they rode; and so came galloping up to his tent as he was about to sit down to supper. To see them well, the King rushed out and would leap upon his saddled horse, when he had the misfortune to stumble upon a guy-rope of the tent and fall, breaking his thigh-bone in two places. Sorrowfully the drabants carried him in a bed into a warm room of the house. This he did not like, for a house was distasteful to him. But his strong nature, abstemiousness, and willingness to heed the surgeons soon put him on crutches, and when we marched, thirty-two guards took turns in carrying him in a litter, for which each received a large silver dollar a day that had come from King Augustus's well-filled chest, as well as also food from the royal cook. All around were spread the tidings of the death of King Charles, reaching even unto Sweden's shores; but the whole army went wild with joy when it again saw him and his charger come galloping down the ranks.

Now at this time I had the good fortune to serve His Majesty in his tent, one of his pages having eaten some food so strange that no medicine or purging would coax it out of his stomach. As this fellow was heavy and ill, and the other page had a bullet wound in his leg, I could notice my royal master in all his habits, and mark how he exemplified those virtues so dear to Sweden, of piety, firmness, and simplicity. Though all the strange people around us, even unto the humblest servants, spoke the Latin tongue, still His Majesty would insist

upon speaking our own language. And though I knew full well of his familiarity with the French and German, still would he use his interpreters when addressed in these tongues, for his own country and mother-language were foremost in his heart.

When tired, he would often throw himself upon his bed, his dogs following, to sleep at his feet; sometimes not even permitting me to pull off the soaked leather boots. Between three and four in the morning he would call me in as he hastily threw aside the blue silk covering of his narrow cot — a fine affair, indeed, compared to the straw I have seen him sleep on in later years, with riding cape and hat to keep him warm. All the furnishings he wished were a few chairs and a table with the tallow candles on each side of the great Bible, with its golden clasps. Gustavus Adolphus's prayer-book he always kept in his pocket. After his quick dressing he would read a chapter of the Holy Book he knew so well, and then kneel and pray. I would then have to follow him rapidly to the chancellery where he would work until seven, when the trumpets sounded and we would, as every Swedish soldier, uncover our heads and offer a prayer to the God of Battles.

His breakfast would be but a scrap of meat and small-beer soup with bread in big slices. Though the fare suited him well enough (else why should he choose it?), he would swallow it like medicine and then be off on his horse, out to reconnoitre or to inspect the troops, away like an arrow from the bowstring, leaving the camp on one or another errand, his guardsmen following in a string as a pack of hounds hot-foot after the

game. Always galloping, mile upon mile, until at ten, drenched to the skin or covered with mud, he returned to work, until the trumpets again at four called him to prayer. Then again, until the early hour of supper and bed, His Majesty remained in the saddle. A strange life for a monarch and most unlike those of his royal brethren!

At last we turned north, in the tracks of Augustus, to Sendomir, on to Lublin for Christmas, the King staying in the Castle of Jakobovice; and still further to the north-west, to the glorious fields of Pultusk and Thorn. Here we discovered the true purport of the visit of that sly monk, Levesi, for he must now out with the truth. He let fall that

the King of Sweden could never oblige to a greater extent His Holiness the Pope than if His Majesty would present him Saint Britas's bones, or permit him to buy them for a considerable sum of money. His Majesty, who was of another religion, set no value on them, but for the Roman Church they were sacred relics and an excellent treasure.

This was all recounted to His Majesty, who gave answer immediately that

it would be dear to His Majesty if he could oblige His Holiness in anything else, but in this it could not happen for, *primo*, one was quite uncertain where Saint Britas's bones could be found; *secundo*, even if one fully knew Saint Britas's grave and bones, His Majesty held it for a great sin and ungodliness, contrary both to religion and his conscience, to wish to strengthen anyone in the superstition and delusion of making a sacred object of some old bones; *tertio*, in what concerned their redemption with money, Levesi would have to find relics elsewhere for sale, for His Majesty was a king and not a tradesman.

Near Pultusk, despite the enemy having got upon the field ahead of us, our horse won a glorious victory, rejoicing at full a thousand of the enemy's horse drowning in the river, and taking as prisoners well-nigh a hundred more, with scarce the loss of a score of our own. As the enemy fled, I bethought myself that there is no king saved by the multitude of a host, nor a mighty man delivered by much strength.

Our camp was indeed to be a busy place during the coming months, for all Europe was agog with our affairs, and a covey of ambassadors came a-courting our King, now they began to feel how the wind lay. One great prince after the other must fight under the Swedish banners, and ministers followed as coach-dogs, hoping for an audience. Audiences were given, and we entered into great alliances with England and the States-General and the newly baked kingdom of Prussia. The Cardinal, the Polish nobles and Prussian deputations pestered us sorely, the Poles saying that their "Serene Republic" came before His Majesty's eyes in order to fetch olive-branches covered with flowers, trusting they were not to be beaten down by the tempest of a bloody war, but that rather peace and justice might, in entwining around the flowering branches, kiss amid their fragrant shades.

Piper, knowing his business, understood how to make reply, and bided his time when the great factions of the Sobieski, the Sapieha, and the sly old Cardinal might learn to know Sweden as a better friend than enemy. And he also comprehended that there was a string in the Polish heart, which, when touched, moved their patriotism, and that was their ill-will against Muscovy.

Of all the great men that came to us in these days, there was one who was indeed to become a Jonathan to our great David, and to be loved and worshipped by us all. Full many a time and in divers manner was our King to hazard his life for him, and "The Little Prince" was to go down amid Swedish soldiers as another word for bravery and fidelity. In these stout days you could find in all the great campaigns and in the vanguard of the great battles, scions of the princely house of Würtemberg. Wherever they fought, and at times on opposing sides, they were known for their devotion to duty, affection, and bravery. In tender years they went to war and they generally attained to well-deserved posts of high command. There were indeed glorious traditions of war in Prince Maximilian Emanuel's family.

It was while our headquarters lay in Okunow that there arrived the Prince of Würtemberg. He had by his lady mother, the Princess Eleanor Juliana, sent word of his desire to come into Swedish service, although being in age but fourteen years. Therefore she had written to His Majesty and received his most gracious consent. At his arrival he delivered the letter of his lady mother, in which she requested that His Majesty would receive him even as would a guardian, and would be pleased to let him lead a campaign or send him to Stockholm, till he had come to full stature and strength. Upon the King's first question, if the Prince had a desire to go to war, he answered, "Yes," to which the King replied that it would be his greatest *plaisir* in the world.

Orders were at once given to procure the Prince all necessary equipage, and equipment for his servants was

likewise provided. But the Prince himself should always remain at the King's table, besides that he should be accommodated out of the King's *caisse* with what he needed. And the Prince had been taught all the proper accomplishments before coming to the Swedish banners. At the universities of Tübingen and Geneva, had he qualified himself in studies, languages and exercises as much as was needful for a Prince. There was thus nothing remaining but either in war or in the practices of courts to bring his knowledge to a flowering.

He was a friendly youth, free and affable in converse. I myself had much companionship of him, close as we were to the King's person, and riding and walking much together. He told me a thousand and one personal tales of how after diverting himself with hunting and ballets, he had set out for our camp, coming first into Leipzig, where the cleanliness and sobriety, the wonderful order and the complaisant and engaging intercourse of the people had charmed him. Next he had journeyed by Dresden, and admired the stallion stable so trig and tidy, and its thirty rooms filled with costly trappings all studded with precious stones, as well as also the wondrous curiosities of the King and his royal menagerie and jewel-chamber.

Coming at last to Poland, he observed how the people went, according to the oriental manner, quite barefooted, though they differed therein from the peoples of the Orient that washing of the feet was not customary among them. Then he wondered at Dantzig, for amid Prussia's great cities this was the richest as Königsberg was most populous, Elbingen the most accurst, and

Thorn the loveliest. He marvelled at the great dogs which guarded the warehouses at night. And he learned matters new to him, — how a nobleman might for thirty great-marks kill another, or a peasant at half this price, and how the warder received six marks from the peasant that killed another or, in default of payment, might kill the murderer.

The inns in which he perforce must lodge were quite different from his own castle. He needed not to fear the dustiness of the floors, for they were of earth, and wetted by the children, the cattle, and the cook by her stove. The stench did much annoy his nostrils, being so penetrating and strong that it might even have been beyond the art of an apothecary to expel it. As it was cold without, the cows and calves were housed in the room with the princely traveller, as well as the swine, which disturbed his slumbers by their loud grunting from under the drinking benches. For nourishment he received thick sour beer and black bread smeared with drippings. And what was left over from the fare of the travellers, the hostess, who would without modesty bare herself, would smear upon her body. Coming at last unto Plozko within sight of our camp-fires, he beheld four young nuns die from fear of the approach of our soldiers. This grieved him.

Having thus seen so many and strange sights, Prince Maximilian Emanuel was right glad to reach us and to put that valor to test which was never to falter and was to be the admiration of our soldiers, even through the day of Poltava, until we said of him and His Gracious Majesty, "*Qualis Rex, talis grex.*"

Now it lay mostly in King Charles's thoughts that King Augustus had a garrison in the rich city of Thorn of some six thousand Saxon foot. So he sent Stenbock to look into the matter, the rest of us soon following upon his heels. On our own march thither, the King and the Prince were riding together when the Prince was thrown by his horse into a ditch. The King, who was neither aware of the ditch nor of the Prince's mishap, tumbled himself and horse so violently upon the Prince, that the little fellow had all wind pressed out of his inners. Not until midnight, when he had sweated mightily by aid of the strong medicaments administered unto him, was he able to regain his speech. Thereupon he had his hair cut off so as to wear it short, after the fashion of His Majesty.

The investment of this city was indeed to prove a long tussle, albeit we were each evening diverted by the comedians come unto us from Stockholm. The new ravelin of the Saxons was at once furnished with cannons and redoubt baskets from which they every morning shot their reveille and every evening their taps with three shots directed at our headquarters and His Majesty's tent, without, God be praised, doing however any other harm than to shoot off the head of the sutler's wife, and into two pieces the body of a cook, who was frying blood-pies in His Majesty's kitchen. Several times the Saxon balls went through the royal tent. It was a sorry day when the Saxon gunners, perceiving the richness of General Lieven's dress, pointed one of their cannon upon him. His Majesty, fearing lest the uniform of the general would be observed in the prominent

position they were both situate, would have pulled him behind him, when at that instant a ball took Lieven's leg off, depositing it some four feet from his body, which greatly grieved the King, as Lieven had been a brave soldier in the armies of Charles the Eleventh of blessed memory.

Amid these many troubles, the letters from the Cardinal came as fast as the hiccoughs of a drunkard, and were as difficult to stop by any of our reasoning. The King likewise showed a remarkable proof of his concern for his colony in America. For hearing that its Bibles and Psalm-books and Catechisms were well-nigh worn out, His Majesty sent orders to the Royal Senate that the same autumn they should for their edification and instruction receive a new supply.

Each night the King and the little Prince would go to the trenches and remain with the soldiers until the break of day; their lives were filled with adventures and dangers in which the Lord held his protecting hand over them. Without ceasing were we busied with the making of woollen sacks and braiding of baskets, while the carpenters fashioned devices for storming, and faggots were carried forward amid the light of the enemy's glowing balls and rockets. His Majesty thus proved himself a master not to be outdone by anybody. He had at last so posted his army in the suburbs of the city and drawn lines round the whole circumference, that the city was all begirt. The works were large, the ditches deep and flanked with innumerable bastions, ravelins, horn-works, redoubts, and palisadoes.

At last, this being September of the year 1703, after

nigh four months' patient waiting, our field artillery arrived and we could from every side full joyfully play upon all portions of the city, setting many a stately edifice aflame. It took not long ere the white flag showed itself from without the crumbling city gate, and the capitulation was accepted by His Gracious Majesty. The walls and towers we had shot down, and the town hall was burned. The generals and colonels, as also many officers, came out so as to make reverence unto our King, while the citizens hid themselves in the cellars. For but four hours were our soldiers allowed to sack the city and plunder its houses, yet in this time many a rich coffer was emptied and money-bag slit. The church and cloister bells we hoisted down with care, and sent with trophies and the right excellent Saxon artillery into Sweden, as well as also many of the twelve thousand soldiers, as we could find no employment for them. The larders and the warehouses were indeed sorry sights, for we found nothing but rotten stinking herring, from the eating of which four thousand soldiers lay sick with cramps in their stomachs.

The streets were narrow and crooked and dark from the overhang of the ancient houses. The houses, too, were so dark within that we were more than once in danger of burning the whole city with the torches the soldiers used in their search for plunder. So crowded were the streets with the screaming, excited crowd of plundering soldiers and distracted citizens that even on horseback and with the authority of an officer I could scarce make my way about. It was a quaint sight to see the frantic efforts of all to get as much as they could in

four short hours allowed for the sacking. At first each man seized what he could find, dropping it when he came upon something seemingly more to his purpose. For the first hour or so anything of value would suffice, however clumsy to carry or unsuitable to the furniture of a soldier. I saw one trooper coming out of one of the finer houses, I suppose that of some noble, bearing upon his back a heavy French clock, which was indeed worth much money, but of no value to any in the city at that time. Before long all such things were rejected, by the soldiers at least, and left either scattered about the streets or to be carried off by the citizens. In one little courtyard from which the tide of plunder had for the moment receded I came upon a bundle, or rather a pillow filled with goods abandoned by a plunderer, and stopped to see what it contained. In the top I found four large silver spoons marked with a crest and seven small ones unmarked and much worn, a fine silver porringer engraved with arms, a pair of heavy silver candlesticks, a long gold chain of fine workmanship which I took to be Italian, and two gold watches. I took the chain and the better of the two watches which indeed served me well for many years. Aside from this I got nothing from the plunder but a pocketful of gold pieces and a right good sword, which I came upon oddly enough.

I met with three foot-soldiers of a marching regiment who had dragged out into the street a feather mattress, in which for some reason they supposed money to be hidden. They ripped it open and sent the feathers flying like a snowstorm and sticking comically in their hair and

beards, but nought did they find within save the sword of which I speak. Why it was hidden there I know not, save that some burgher may have set great store by it. The soldiers were about to break it in their rage, when I stopped them and commanded them to hand it over to me. It was a fine blade of hard Italian steel, inlaid a little with gold just below the hilt and the hilt plain. There being no scabbard therewith, I was about to toss it aside, when I bethought me that it was a better blade than my own, and trying it found it to fit my scabbard to a nicety. Therefore I threw aside the blade I had carried and slipped my plunder into my scabbard. It served me well throughout all my campaigns, and hangs now on the wall above me as I write.

From a large house fronting on the market square came two fusileers carrying a huge, heavy Spanish mirror in a silver frame set with jewels. From this they kicked the glass with their heavy boots and set it down to crack the silver and pick out the jewels like boys cracking walnuts. Foodstuffs, too, were eagerly sought and as eagerly defended by the housewives. I saw one stout trooper disputing with a buxom woman the possession of a handsome ham. Before I had passed they came to fisticuffs over it, in which, if my memory serves, the woman had the better, but whether through her own strength or the gallantry of the trooper, I cannot say. When our legs were tiring of their joyous running hither and thither, and our pockets were bulging with the treasures we had found, Lagercrona ordered the trumpets to sound and we must hold up with the merry plundering.

The burghers, seeing the soldiers desist and obedient as ever Swedish soldiers are, came out from under the earth and the many holes and hiding-places into which they had crept in their great agony and fear. They came to the King and our camp. For their refreshment as well as for that of the common soldiers who were now our prisoners, a *partie* of oxen and sheep was driven forth. These they were not alone to devour, but also to send to their wives within the city walls. Count Sperling also magnificently regaled all the officers of the garrison, the King having ordered fifty dishes out of his own kitchen for such purpose. But the King himself, at the royal table, dined full regally the commanding officers, His Majesty pleasing after this feast to walk out among the rabble and give two ducats to every soldier's wife, who had been at Kliszow and recognized him, despite his simple blue coat.

At last we shot a great *victoria* over the happy conquest of this same city, which happened first with all the cannons, twice charged around the whole fortress, and the works of all the batteries, whereupon one regiment after the other throughout the whole army twice shot *victoria* with their musketry, beginning by battalions with the King's Guards. This it was a great joy to hear; even the women from the city, who swarmed and crawled around us like ants, clapped their hands and jumped in the air with glee. Upon the market-place by the town hall, music was made with all manner of instruments. We let the Saxons play for us. One amid them played upon a harp like unto that of King David, but his strings were of steel wires. One officer gave this

harpist eight silver wires for his harp, and the rest of us all gave him some more, so that he at last got his harp full, well a couple of hundred.

With us it was thus well — we had the country about us at command, and daily fetched our provision and forage from the fields; but not so with our other armies and provinces. The Muscovites had slowly been learning many a useful lesson in the arts of war and making of soldiers. That arch schemer and devil, Patkul, had been busily forming an European army for Peter out of wild and cowardly herds like unto those we whipped at Narva. Even as we victoriously entered Thorn, did Patkul's machinations at last bring about a new alliance between Peter and Augustus, whereby Poland was opened for the Muscovite soldiers, without the Republic knowing aught of what was going on. Augustus should conclude no separate peace with Sweden, while Peter was yearly to send him 300,000 roubles and lend him twelve thousand of his best foot.

In our northern provinces, matters had reached a sad condition. Narva had fallen after a brave resistance. Vast numbers were slain, for not to mention three thousand men which the Muscovites lost in the attack, nor the slaughter of the Swedish soldiers, the poor inhabitants lay butchered in heaps; streams of blood ran through the streets, and the enemy were employed for three days together in drawing out the dead, wounded and sick on wagons and carts. They carried them all to the bridge of Ivanogrod where they dumped the dead and living, without mercy, one upon the other in the river. Our small armies had been beaten by an avalanche

of Russians, and Ingria, for which Peter's mouth so long had watered, had completely fallen in his power. From our Swedish battlements, the Tsar had received the embassy of Achmed the Third, from Constantinople. The inhabitants, old and young, were carried into Muscovy to live in captivity.

I cannot here avoid relating that unto the lucky lot of General Bauer fell a fair young captive, Catherine Rabe, who was a buxom serving-wench in the household of the Provost of the churches of Marienburg. That she here was brought to light and favor, was to prove a misfortune for Sweden. Strange was thus the beginning of the arbitress of the north and mediatrix of Europe!

Men, women and children were packed like geese in basket-wagons, their heads sticking up between the reeds. Alas, when they reached the borders of Tartary, there were but a couple living to each score, and not plump ones at that. Everywhere was there wailing and gnashing of teeth. The Muscovite was, alas, learning the evil of their saying that "to fly may not be mostly honorable, but it is sensible."

These were indeed the days for a soldier to live in. Outside our own camps many a drum was beating and bugle bravely blowing. Prince Eugene was defeating Catinat at Carpi and Villeroi at Chiari. Marlborough, in his corner of Europe, captured the strong fortresses on the Maas, while on the other hand, Vendôme checked the Savoyan Prince's advance and Villars defeated the Austrians at Höchstadt.

In the most northerly corner of our province, the Muscovite Tsar had founded a new capital on the very

outskirts of his dominions, rather than in their centre. He wished thus to proclaim himself loudly a European sovereign instead of an Asiatic, and would build himself on the shores of his new city, a fleet with which to dispute with us the dominion of the Baltic. It was to be a death grapple with Sweden rather than the destruction of Tartar and Chinese hordes. The prisoners that escaped into our Swedish camps told of the strange manner in which the Muscovites builded their fortress, for knowing neither barrow to wheel nor spade nor pick, they carried the dirt which they dug with their naked hands, in the rags and skirts of their clothing, depositing it without the walls of the enclosure they were building with great toil

CHAPTER X

LEMBERG AND WARSAW

And now the year of our Lord 1705 was dawning, with our armies in winter quarters by the Castle of Heilsberg, while Arvid Horn, turned statesman, was sent into Warsaw with the King's best wishes for the assembled Polish nobles to come into a speedy conclusion. It was a strange business, and our King's good efforts were not appreciated, for Piper showed me a billet sent into his tent by one of the party, who had the effrontery to state that

> history could scarcely show forth aught more remarkable than the Polish embroglio. King Charles in the most barbarous manner, at the head of his great horse and foot, determined upon a whole people submitting to his every whim, treating them with the most horrible brutality, ravaging, destroying and eating up the country, and yet insisting full loudly that he has come as a deliverer, to save it from awful tyranny.

Indeed, it was passing strange to see the brave captain of the drabants turned into an artful statesman, adroit in speech and insistent with his arguments. It seemed, with his clear vision and wise judgment, as if he were as great in the council chamber as 'mid the turmoil of battle, showing a rare wisdom in reading the hearts of men and bending them to his will. Unto the Cardinal he found it necessary constantly to apply the spurs, in order that there might be no lagging by the roadside, and the belts of the Polish nobles swallowed gold as the

bear does honey. When they, however, learned from the letters we had by good fortune taken from Countess Königsmarck and Count Vitzthum how traitorously Augustus had consented unto secretly promising Polish territory to Sweden for the price of peace, great became their wrath and loud their curses. It was not long ere all fealty to King Augustus was forsworn, the throne declared vacant, and his Eminence requested to hasten the arrangements for the election of a new king.

Though there had been much ado to get rid of Augustus, it seemed no easier task to find a king to replace him. Opalinsky was a well-liked name, but for two reasons was it necessary to pass him by. The first being his quarrelsome insolence, which offended his many brother-electors, and the second that in the heat of argument he fell down dead amid them. So there was also the great name of Sobieski. Not alone had King John Sobieski saved Poland and the Holy Roman Empire from the Turks, but later proved a most excellent regent. Augustus had traitorously, contrary to every law of God and man, imprisoned two of King John's sons, and the third, Prince Alexander, fled in terror unto our camp; but King he would not be. Bad enough had it been to be prince. His Eminence still cast sheep's eyes upon the Prince of Conti, and many of the nobles shouted lustily for the Crown General Subomirski, but the choice was to fall upon the young voyevod of Posen, Stanislaus Lecszinski. Some time before, this young nobleman, whose career was afterward so tragic, had come to His Majesty's notice and had received also favorable comment from Horn. Even he, however, was

none too well furnished with courage, but would have preferred the hunt and the smoking of his much tobacco. He was in the hey-day of his youth, he himself and his spouse, an Opalinsky, from amid the noblest lineage of the realm. He was full of knowledge and eagerness, straightforward, and of an engaging complaisance which secured him the good-will of Polish nobles.

On the historic plain of Vela, outside Warsaw, the great and lesser noblemen assembled to debate and quarrel. The field surgeons were kept nigh as busy with the results of their debates as upon the battlefield.

Wishing to keep his sly finger out of this dangerous pie, the Cardinal had easily let himself be persuaded by his mistress, Madam Towianski, to remain in prayer and meditation away from the cavil and strife. There were many barons of all degrees, princes and prelates, to strut and parade themselves, dressed in their finest garments amid their retinues of noble retainers and domestics. In order that some action might be taken, Polish horse as well as a goodly detachment of Swedish troops surrounded the electors and senators. At last, 'mid the urging of Horn on one side and the shouting on the other, Stanislaus was made King, while Klinckowström galloped off as fast as his horse could carry him to bring the joyful news to Charles, impatiently waiting without, at Blonie. Now must the crown be set upon Stanislaus's head.

But King Charles could ill bring his thoughts to dwell upon affairs of state, for his heart was sick within him over the fatal jest he had so innocently practised on his beloved chamberlain and master-of-horse, Axel Hård.

As boys they had played their daredevil pranks together, while at Narva Hård had dragged his royal master out of the morass and from out of the water of the Düna. Loving His Majesty with the mute devotion of a dog, Hård would gladly have laid his life down for his master. Now in camp at Heilsberg, the autumn days were too long to be spent wholly in reading German or Scandinavian histories, or going a-riding, or in reading and practising the art of fortification or shooting or hunting. And so, to pass the idle hours most divertingly, the King and his drabants would ofttimes divide into two parties and storm upon each other in full gallop, seeing whether they might not with the butt edges of their swords beat each other off their horses or at least break an arm or two without too much hurt. Axel Hård pushed in charging clear through King Charles's troop, so that he might take him prisoner. So he cried out lustily, "Were I now an enemy, what would Your Majesty do?" Charles answered thereto, "Thus I would do," and thereupon His Majesty fired the pistol which he believed filled only with loose powder right at the breast of his friend. Alas, the ramrod had been inadvertently left within it and the poor drabant, bored through the breast, sank down in his blood. He died two days thereafter, having patiently and devotedly endeavored to console our agonized King. In confessing before the evening meal to his chaplain, Jöran Nordberg, King Charles's face was bathed in tears which still flowed as he sat at table, and long did he remain more silent than ever in his own council. Until his death this unhappy day remained a day of fasting and prayer.

Hård was not the only loss, for the faithful dog, Pompey, died at the same time. As if to show that the friends of His Majesty had everything to expect from his gratitude, Pompey's corpse was sent into Sweden for proper burial in the same vessel that conveyed brave Axel Hård, and upon the coffin of Pompey these lines were inscribed: "Pompeius egregius canus, invectissimo Suecorum Regi merito charus, in Polonia mortuus, inde in Sueciam, ne extra patriam tumularetur transmissus."

At this time the King also wrote unto his sister, the Princess Ulrica Eleanora, in order once more to acquaint her with our life in the camps and to dissuade her from coming, as she had graciously expressed a desire to do, the long and dangerous way to pay us compliments and a visit. His Majesty thus wrote:

SERENEST PRINCESS:

HIGHEST-HONORED, DEAREST SISTER!

From here I have not much to recount, for it must already be known, what has happened. We have now had a lot of Swedish ladies who came over this spring by ship and had a bevy of brides with them, so that here have been held weddings nigh every day. But the passion of the newly wedded men will now soon have to abate, for we must ere long break up and seek to divert ourselves with the pleasant and usual "field" promenade.

Otherwise, my dear Sister must know that some weeks ago I had the great misfortune to lose the good Axel Hård, in that he was wounded by a shot through carelessness in play, and so severely that he later died of it.

I beg pardon that I must in haste write so badly and in confusion. I recommend myself to Mon Cœur's constant grace, and remain unto death, my heart's Sister's humblest, truest, brother and servant,

CAROLUS.

This life of entertaining our wives and sucking our paws in laziness could not last long. So it came to our good King's mind no longer to permit Augustus to sleep in security, but at once to attack his strong city of Lemberg. For this there were good reasons, for, although the city was surrounded by many a deep moat, high wall and lofty tower, the Turkish hordes had withdrawn from its walls after a three months' siege and, having never been conquered, it bore the proud device, *intacta virgo*.

The deflowering of this unravished bride was short work for us. Where one hundred thousand Turks had failed during three long months, our boys in blue conquered within the bleeding of a stuck pig, for two hours saw us inside the walls. There we marvelled greatly at the houses and churches, for albeit we knew it to be the principal trading centre of Red Russia and prized as one of the most beautiful cities in Poland, yet we knew not of such fine buildings. Though the good townspeople had scurried like rats for their cellars and were peeping out anxiously from the gratings upon the wares they had in their haste left standing upon the market-places, it was not long before we saw much trade going on 'twixt all manner of peoples, such as the Turks and Persians, Armenians and Muscovites and others, and the barefooted Franciscan monks stealing bites as they threaded their barefooted way amid the thoroughfares. And also in the city we found a great number of Turkish and Tartar slaves, from whom His Majesty had their shackles struck off, giving them freedom to go where they listed, which caused an indescribable joy to these poor people.

But, while the cat is away the mice will play. Augustus, knowing our steps turned in the tempting direction of Lemberg, believed now was the time to strike a coward's blow at Warsaw, where Arvid Horn sat with but 480 men under his command. The little Prince would gladly have come to the rescue. But how could he? For he had lately gone on a visit into Augustus's finest city of Königsberg to see two fine fellows. One of them was a Prussian peasant who would swallow a knife, whereupon he would with the surgeon's care have it cut out of his belly, all for the earning of a bag of ducats. And the other was a still more precious fellow, for, he had been born without hands and feet. None the less, he took a quill and cut it himself to rights, and wrote with it as well as the best clerk, threaded also with great speed a thread through the needle's eye, played cards and ninepins, shot off a gun and performed many a jolly prank.

So poor Horn was left alone, in consternation over his sorry plight, while the lady mother and Queen-elect and children of Stanislaus must flee head over heels. Yes, even the young Princess, later to become Queen of France, must take refuge behind the dung-heap of a stable. Thirty thousand Saxons surrounded the walls, which would soon have been set afire by the violent bombardment of fireballs, had not a terrific rainstorm, by the grace of God, put out the many fires. When, however, all resistance has proved hopeless and the enemy is pouring tar upon the walls with which to ignite them, Horn humbly requests permission that the 418 men still remaining unto him may graciously be permitted to

come outside into the field and meet in open combat, fighting unto the end, 1250 of the finest Saxon or Polish soldiers or noblemen as he might deem most fit. For three to one, asserted Horn, would they gladly fight them, for the honor and everlasting glory of the golden crowns of Sweden.

Augustus answered in neither black nor white, for he liked not the proposal, neither did the offer find favor among his officers — so the gallant little band was forced to surrender.

No sooner had Charles heard these tidings than off we hurried bag and baggage, southward once more to Warsaw. Away flew Augustus, south and west.

And then we rested, thank God, at Ravitz for well-nigh eight months. 'Twere no Egyptian fleshpots, for food was scanty, and even King Charles had but hay or straw upon which to lay himself and ofttimes but the crust of hard bread for his meal. Here we exchanged our prisoners, and His Majesty clad the Saxons anew from head to foot, so that they were so clean and fine that they could not refrain from constantly gazing upon their clothes. And here, too, came the Queen-elect of Poland and King Stanislaus's lady mother, who were complimented and lodged in our best quarters. Arvid Horn had also got marriage thoughts in his head and must needs wed the Lady Inga Törnflycht, who had accompanied her sister, the Lady Piper, come upon a visit to her lord.

With spring came the tidings of the Holy Roman Emperor's death and of Joseph I having succeeded him upon the throne, while King Augustus, having cleansed

his system at Karlsbad and being lonely without the Princess Lubomirski, had sent for her to come to him. Colonel Hagen having gotten wind of the intended amorous voyage of the Princess, waylaid her and all her baggage and trappings, in which he found rich booty of silver, jewels and moneys. King Charles, now receiving word of all this, wrote with his own hand: —

The Colonel shall at once make his prisoner free, with all that to her belongs, for we do not wage war against womenfolk. And if the Princess does not believe herself entirely secure for the remainder of the journey, then the Colonel shall escort her to the Saxon border, making pleasant company upon the way.

Despite our winter quarters being permanently situated at Ravitz, this winter between 1704 and 1705 was not without adventure, as may be seen from the billet sent unto the Princess Ulrica by His Majesty and whimsically penned in the French tongue.

Tout l'hiver c'est passé en marches et contre-marches, d'abord depuis Varsovie jusqu'à Sendomir, Jarislaw, Lemburg, et puis en arrière en longeant Samak, Lublin, Weingraf, Burgström, et enfin Varsovie et Ravitz. On a été ainsi jusqu'en Silésie et, dans ces excursions une partie de la cavalerie suédoise a été assez heureuse pour trouver à livrer bataille un soir vers le crépuscule contre l'infanterie Saxonne, mais celle-ci, grâce a l'obscurité, a trouvé moyen d'échapper. La cavalerie suédoise a rencontré ensuite une troupe de Moscovites, puis une troupe de Cosaques qui ont été massacrés. Depuis, l'armée s'est établie dans les villages et les soldats s'y reposent comme des chiens fainéants jusqu'à ce qu'une nouvelle occasion se présente. . . . J'ai reçu la dernière lettre de mon cœur, qui m'annonce le projet de mon cœur et de ma sœur Hedvige de faire le pénible voyage de Stockholm à Ravitz. Je ne souhaiterais rien plus vivement que de pou-

voir présenter une fois personellement mes hommages aux sœurs de mon cœur; ce serait mon plus grand plaisir, et, si les soins de l'armée me le permettait, je ne négligerais rien pour aller à la rencontre des sœurs de mon cœur; mais je crois le voyage à peu près impossible et certainement trop pénible pour mes chères sœurs, d'autant plus que personne n'est jamais sur du lieu où l'armée est fixée pour quelque temps.

CHAPTER XI

CHECKMATE FOR AUGUSTUS

But this being all over, we moved into Blonie in September, 1705, to see to the crowning of Stanislaus — and to stay there until came the new year, 1706. 'Twas no easy matter to find prelate to crown and anoint the King, nor, what is more, to discover the wherewithal to crown him, for King Augustus had long ago packed the crown regalia amid his baggage into Saxony, where there might be no further dispute about them. And the Pope in Rome, seeing what way the wind blew, wrote to his Polish Children in Christ a circular letter, wherein they were warned to have no finger in the coronation. But like unto many a papal letter, it had the opposite effect from that intended, causing much bitterness among the magnates, angered at the interference of the Holy Father in their own household matters. One after another the difficulties were overcome. The Primate feigning too great illness to set the crown upon Stanislaus's head, we started a-hunting for the Archbishop of Lemberg, Dzielinski. So that he might escape from the coronation and the results to be expected from it in another as well as this world, he had hidden himself with a few faithful retainers in a swamp situated deep in a forest.

From this refuge Charles sent two or three companies of drabants under my direction to oust him. We trotted

out there at near sunset, and found it a dreary enough place, with sparse thickets about the edge, and such ground within as we dared not trust our horses to, nor ourselves either for that matter. It was clear enough that there must be some secret way in, safe enough if one could but find it; but for that we had no time. We must produce the Archbishop before sunrise and could not hunt rabbit-paths by the light of the will-o'-the-wisp. Accordingly we set ourselves completely around the swamp and waited till about the rising of the moon, whereupon, I giving the signal, we raised such a devilish din what with firing our carbines and pistols into the air and yelling like Tartars and Kalmuks, that the Archbishop must have thought that all the devils of hell were let loose in his swamp. Out he came and in a sorry plight, for he was mired to the waist with losing his path in haste and darkness, torn with briers, and fairly sobbing for breath. Even as he was, we took him straight before the King, who added to our amusement by receiving him with all the pomp and ceremony he could command at the moment, as if the Archbishop had been in full pontifical attire.

Now the Pope was too far away in Rome, while Charles was not many leagues off, so, despite the strict interdiction of the letter and the fearful penalties threatened, the frightened prelate understood the lesser of the two dangers to be the more distant one and decided to proceed with both crowning and anointing. And a lucky fellow he was, that this fear of the Swedes got the better of his scruples, for Radziejowski fell sick and died of annoyances while the Archbishop succeeded

him in the primacy and fat livings. And as for crown jewels, Charles was not going to stand upon such trifles, nor, for the matter of that, make a king without a real crown; so Horn was instructed to order in Warsaw crowns garnished with jewels as well as sceptres and apples of massive gold, and also costly clothes and other belongings. These were indeed busy days for the Jews.

At this time there arrived Count Potocki, Palatine of Kiovia, with all his troops, among whom there were eight hundred Kalmuck Tartars. Their flat and horrible faces and strange manner of living afforded our army not a little wonder and entertainment. They had also horses as ugly and deformed as themselves, but so admirable for speed and work that King Charles and the little Prince and several among our rich officers purchased great numbers of them at forty to fifty ducats a head. But I am delaying the account of the coronation.

When the senators and deputies had prepared the *Pacta Conventa*, Stanislaus first repaired, on the eve of his coronation, to the Church of St. John, where he swore the solemn observance of it. For this purpose he had set out from the great palace of the Bielinski, where he was lodging, the coaches of the palatines and deputies having commenced the procession, followed by those of the bishops and senators, the lifeguards coming last and immediately preceding Stanislaus. The Archbishop, now forgetful of his earlier fear, went forward to the altar in his pontifical robes. As soon as he had read the *Pacta Conventa* and the formulary of the oaths, Stanislaus repeats them upon his knees, word for word.

The following day being the great day, their majesties,

Stanislaus and his spouse, repaired to the castle *incog.* They had now fasted for three days in order properly to prepare themselves for the solemnity of the coronation as well as the receiving of the blessed sacraments. While the senators and deputies and nobles were assembling in the church, the King was armed at all points and over his shoulders was thrown a Polish mantle of red velvet, lined with sable. The Queen was dressed like a bride, in white and cloth of silver, with her hair unbraided and flowing down her back, while upon her head and breast were jewels of rare value. At every gate of the church was posted a guard of Swedes in the pleasant company of a Polish officer, so that all who requested admission might be examined fittingly.

In the choir opposite the high altar was there erected an *estrade*, on which were placed the two thrones beneath high canopies, and all around the same, were the great Swedish officers and grandees and Polish deputies. Three elbow-chairs were placed to one side, and as it were out of observation, which chairs were for the King of Sweden and the Princes of Würtemberg and Mecklenburg, and there were also seats for Count Piper and certain other of the finest Swedish lords. Opposite them was there also another balcony, where sat Madame Royale, the King's mother, and certain other ladies of the highest quality. And all this mighty company being thus happily placed, each according to his position upon earth, the procession started from their majesties' apartments, amid rows of flambeaux, with the new regalia all borne on cushions of cloth of silver; and also was there borne the standard of the kingdom.

As soon as the first in the procession entered the church, the music began from two galleries, increasing gradually as the King approached, until the whole band were in their full concert at the moment His Polish Majesty appeared. The Archbishop being seated before the altar, the Bishop of Camineck addressed the following words to him in Latin: "Our Holy Mother Church desires that this valiant knight, elected King, should be crowned." Thereupon the Archbishop demands, "Is he worthy? Does he design to fulfill his duty?" And the Bishop answers, "Yes, he is very worthy, and he will fulfill it."

The King's armor having been sore heavy, he was mighty glad of the noblemen who supported him under the arms. These now took off the King's helmet; he then kissed the Bishop's ring and pronounced the oath. The Archbishop, having bared his head, fell upon his knees as did likewise the other ecclesiastics, and the King fell upon the pavement, stretching out his arms so as to make the sign of the cross with his body. Thereupon the King's mantle and gauntlets were taken off, and he felt more at his ease. Then the Archbishop, with the thumb of his right hand anointed the palm of the King's right hand and his elbow and the back of his neck, at the same time pronouncing these words: "I anoint thee King, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost." Afterwards the Archbishop wiped his thumb with bread and washed himself, while a bishop dried the King with bread and cotton.

His Majesty was then conducted to the vestry, where he changed his military habit for an episcopal robe all

white, which he was to keep as long as he lived, it being to serve for his winding sheet, as King John before him had been interred in his coronation robes. After this the King was again led back to the altar, where the Archbishop presented him with a drawn sword, which His Majesty gave to his sword-bearer, who returned it into the scabbard and hung it at His Majesty's side, who then drew it again, and after making several military flourishes to signify how it ought to be used, sheathed it once more.

And now, when the Queen also had been crowned and anointed, the *Te Deum* was sung and the Grand Mass was celebrated, whereupon all shouted lustily, "Long live the King and Queen!" After disrobing, the ambassadors, disrobed before, called upon the King and Queen and the Queen Mother, whereupon, King Charles having returned to Blonie, all sat down to feast, each seated according to his rank. But Prince Sobieski and the lady mother would absent themselves, for they liked not to sit at table below the Swedish ambassadors.

All this had been watched with but little pleasure by either Augustus or Peter. Truly it stank in their nostrils, as did also the peace which was now concluded between Sweden and Poland.

But the worst was yet to come. At Grodno Augustus and Peter had once more sworn friendship. While they were feasting and plotting, Rehnsköld won the most glorious of victories in West Prussia, putting Muscovites and Saxons again to flight with their tails between their legs. This was at Fraustadt of glorious memory. The Saxon generals, knowing well our con-

tempt for the Muscovites, turned out the red linings of their coats so that they might look like Saxon foot. — "Down with everything" [1] was the Saxon battle-cry, while ours was "With God's help." Rehnsköld, understanding that, with no artillery whatever, his brave boys in blue could stand no long fight, determined upon a rapid and furious attack. He spoke to his commanders of horse, explaining unto them where lay their only safety, then recommending them unto God's help, told them how, upon the command of "Down," they should alight from the charge and attempt to take the enemy's cannon in hand-to-hand fight. Thereupon Rehnsköld ordered prayer, and after "Ein' feste Burg" had been sung, the horsemen plunged ahead, with the blue and yellow streamers.

Ere three hours were spent, every Saxon and Muscovite cannon was trained upon the fleeing allies and the day of glory and renown had been won for the Lion of the North, and twenty-nine battalions were captured or hewn to pieces. While unto the Saxons was shown mercy, not so did it fare with their Muscovite allies, whose white coats shewed their crimson linings. They were all gathered before our front and shot to pieces, so that it was a sorry sight to behold. How great was the joy of King Charles may be seen, for he must write unto his general: —

GENERAL: —

It is a right gallant affront you have made the former King of Poland. You must have felt bravely proud when you stormed ahead without respect for the cannonade or aught in

[1] *Macht alles nieder.*

the path of your horse. I can now no longer delay in wishing the General much happiness in the stout and great action which the General led against the Saxon. It is surely so complete and brave a victory which our Lord has this time given that it cannot be greater. And I rejoice above all bounds, that the General and the good regiments have had the pleasure of enjoying so fierce and happy a game. The enemy have a few times received a drubbing from our side. I have now no more time to write, but must with haste end my letter.

I remain the General's well-disposed

CAROLUS.

Rehnsköld was made field-marshal and elevated to be a count. A well-deserved reward for this great soldier, not alone brave in leading his troops upon the field of battle, but great in the planning and carrying out of his campaigns. Thorough in his knowledge, highly educated, kindly and well-meaning, with the interests of his soldiers always at heart, he had also the self-restraint and obedience to execute his master's orders, when he heartily disapproved of them and believed they would bring disaster. A perfect warrior, happy to share with the humblest in his army every privation and weary effort.

Many others were promoted also, and for myself I think I might have had what I pleased and indeed did have all that I wished. Charles professed himself well pleased for some service I rendered, which I need not set down here, but he called it one of exceptional bravery. That night when all had left his tent but me, he turned to me with his rare grave smile.

"Well, Klingspor," says he, "art thou pleased to be colonel of drabants, or wouldst thou rather be a general of brigade?"

"Your Majesty," says I, "there is more than one of your generals of brigade that would change his condition for mine, for indeed I have had the offer."

"And what is your mind?"

"I am of their mind too," says I, "for no such offer have I accepted, nor would I."

"Remember then," says he, "if ever the time comes when there is a command that thou wouldst have, thou hast but to ask it."

"Indeed Your Majesty," says I, "I have nought to ask for myself, but for my son and my family Your Majesty's protecting care."

"They have it ever, Klingspor," says he; and at that time no more was said, but his last word then was the true one, for so long as His Majesty lived we felt always his bounty and protection. And there were comrades of mine who, learning of the offer the King had made me, told me that I had thrown away with my left hand the luck that I had grasped with my right; but I have no such thought for, saving a rank that would have been unfitting to a plain soldier like myself, I could have had nought higher than at the time I did have. I say not but that if His Majesty's life had been longer I might have risen higher, but my sorrow is not for that, but only for the untimely ending of my royal master's brilliant career.

CHAPTER XII

INVASION OF SAXONY

And now comes a new turn in our affairs, and to the astonished and terrified Europe a new and unexpected scene on the stage of our wars. For the mountain being unwilling to come unto Mahomet, Mahomet decided to go to the mountain; or to speak without phrases, King Charles decided to march right into the Kingdom of Saxony. Once again were the bugles of Sweden and the Protestant hymns to sound across the battlefields of Germany; and the Roman Empire, as well as each little German state, was to look with apprehension upon coming events.

Before we turned however to the fleshpots of Saxony, we were to have a sorry winter, for there was but little of either victuals or forage, and the season began to look sourly upon us. The little Prince said that "Hunger war Koch und Mangel war Kellner." Brandy, mead, butter and beer became more and more scarce. The miserable peasants dug their food down into the earth and then fled to some far-off region ere we reached their habitations and were able to question them. So we must find them by putting to good use divers curiously wrought swords and pikes with hooks and holes in their points, with which we poked in the ground where it looked suspicious. And when they drew out straw, there would we know was a hidden supply.

We found meat and pork, butter, tallow, honey, wax, mead, and brandy, cups and brass, all manner of clothes, linen, wheat, rye, corn and oats.

Especially when the thaw came on, at which times the snow melted from off these vaulted caverns, did we find wherewithal to keep us alive. But even then the great difficulty of finding these provisions was exceeded by the danger attending the discovery to those who descended, at the instant the cells were opened. Such abundance of vapors immediately belched forth with steam as killed numbers of our brave and starving people, till fatal experience taught them to wait with patience, despite the gnawing at their vitals, until such time as the vapors were dispersed and they might thus feed without suffocation surprising them first.

My memory of this time is a confused thought of swamps and nasty, wet weather. We had to our camp nought but muddy huts roofed with green branches, which had served us well enough for protection from burning sun or the pestilent night air, but for such torrents of rain as we had they were worse than useless, being ever flooded and half the time unbearable. The King had scarce better for himself, as ever he shared what fortune came to his soldiers. He had indeed a tent to himself and a cook tent for his kitchen, but his tent was always damp and cold, though his attendants tried their best to warm it with round shot heated in our fires and brought into the tent; but the heat that they gave out was less to be noticed than was the unendurable stench of the hot iron, and the smoke from such bits of the fire as always clung to them. The tent used as

kitchen, too, was so far from the King's tent that never came hot food to his table, but always stone cold, and indeed with my own eyes I have seen frost on his meat or a skim of ice over his soup or his beer. But all this he seemed scarce to know, for he ate his food heedlessly as always, and never by any word took note of whether it were cold or hot.

It was in March of this year, that is, 1706, that there befell one of the most terrifying of the numerous accidents of which I have to tell, in which His Majesty so nearly lost the life on which so much depended. Grodno was to be besieged, and to that end a bridge was to be built across the river Niemen; for the ice was too rotten to bear us and our artillery, though it would hold in most places any ordinary weight, and it was our habit to walk out upon it to observe the building of the bridge.

At one such time His Majesty had gone forward some dozen or two of paces beyond where stood the little Prince, Klinckowström with other officers, and I. I was watching the bringing forward of some timbers when suddenly the Prince said close behind me, "In the name of God! the King has gone down!"

We turned around and ran together toward the hole where the rotten place in the ice had let the King down, but the ice cracking about us warned us back. Then the King's head and his hand appeared through the black water at the edge of the hole, and he clung to the edge of the ice, for the current was sucking him under right strongly. A page called to him and asked if he could hold while we went for some means to reach him, and he answered that he could for a brief time, but that we

should make haste or he would either be frozen or sucked under the ice; and this he said calmly enough as if he were speaking of some ordinary matter. We turned then to find some plank or other means to save him, but the Prince and Wachtmeister, being light of weight, fetched about from different sides and crept toward him from over the rotten ice. The Prince reaching him first, caught him by the scabbard of his sword, but it gave way, and more I saw not, for I was seeking for a plank. When I came back they had him out, and Stenbock was begging him to change his clothes; but that he scorned and rode back to his quarters a full Swedish mile through the biting March wind whereby he was none the worse.

He did not stop in his canter until he came upon a sadly wounded captain, stretched upon the ground after an encounter with our outposts. His left arm had been hewn from its socket and life was ebbing fast. This officer, by name Busanville, was a Frenchman. His Majesty addressed several questions to him in the French tongue, as it seemed all the poor fellow was capable of understanding in his last moments. Seeing our King must be an officer in authority, the Frenchman answered his questioning with the spirit becoming a soldier and a gentleman of his nation. In his turn, he asked if the King of Sweden had been near the action in which he had received his fatal wound, adding that he would die quite happy if he but might see this great prince.

The King then made himself known, whereupon the officer raised with much effort his remaining hand to salute and said with an air of great satisfaction these

words: "I have desired for many years to enter the service of Your Majesty, but fate has willed that I should serve against so valiant a prince. Words now fail me. May God bless Your Majesty and give unto your undertakings all the success you so richly deserve." Thereupon he expired before our eyes. And he was buried in the church of the near-by cloister with all the honors of war at the expense of our King. For the captain had spoken well and died bravely.

Not so did it fare with the Russian prisoners who had surrendered unto us that day in a most cowardly manner. For the same night they were lighted out from our camp with torches, after half their clothes had been cut off them as well as half of the hair had been shaven from off their heads. They had also been given a white banner of shame without device, which had been dipped in manure.

And here would I digress, for I am reminded of brave Svante Horn, who also fared so sorrily at this time. He had but a short time since gone into the wood accompanied by twenty-four horse in search of forage. Surprised by over two hundred Poles, they fought for seven hours. Every Swede fell, Horn alone returning to camp so covered with gore that we knew him not until with snow we had washed him white again. At Fraustadt where he had followed hard upon Rehnsköld's heels, Horn was so badly hewn in the head that fourteen splinters of bone must be removed by the surgeon, all of which he bore with the patience of a watching cat. The following year — for I might as well relate his career until its close — he was fallen upon at his post in

Lithuania by a band of Kalmucks, who beat him with a club on the head so that the blood squirted out of his eyes and his nose, and through the drums of his ears. And to make sure, the Kalmucks thrust a sword in his chest and pricked his stomach-bag with a pike. He was left for dead, which he well-nigh was, and one would have believed he had received enough. Not at all. His faithful servant, Daniel Lidbom, found him, and hearing to his unspeakable joy some faint groans, poured wine and milk into his master through the opening of a tooth that had been knocked out of his mouth well-nigh swollen together. Albeit his wounded and shattered body might now need peace and rest, he dragged himself after the army, and, though almost lame on one side, he must take his part in the great charge at Poltava, steadied by riding close up to a comrade for support upon the side that was stiff. Here his right leg was crushed. So Horn and Lidbom went to Siberia for thirteen years, where the master made baskets while the servant became a saddler. Coming home at last, Horn settled in Småland. He was weak in body, but not yet forty, and right glad when he, in 1741, heard there was once more war with the Muscovite. For many years more he fought them, and Daniel, become more comrade than servant, was always by his side. He must always sit by the colonel's right side at table, however fine the company might be. He is still honored and jovial, but of strict virtue and great fear of God.[1] Of such stuff were the Carolines made.

[1] Svante Horn fought the Russians steadily from 1741 to 1771 — dying finally in his eighty-second year. — Ed.

CHAPTER XIII

ALTRANSTÄDT

And now, with the breaking of spring, we came unto the vast lakes and bogs of Volhynia, where we found many a bear and stag and turtle, and all manner of water-birds, such as cranes, swans, wild geese and ducks. The crawfish had claws of a monstrous length. The inhabitants gathered them in great numbers and, upon drying, ground them into meal, of which they as well as their household animals ate with avidity. And I noticed with much curiosity that when their hens ate of it, they laid eggs more red than yellow; after having tried them upon the stomachs of our captive soldiers without their even producing among them a looseness of the bowels, we also ate of them with much delectation.

Once across these marshy regions, we came into a paradise of corn, the golden racks dotting the fields to our enraptured eyes. In the woods likewise, we found rosemary, asparagus, pulse and various wild fruits, which were little inferior to those cultivated by art.

With their dead the inhabitants seemed to have all manner of strange customs and tomfooleries. It was laughable to observe and listen to the wailing over the corpse. Before burial, it would be placed in a chamber. Then when a neighbor came to see the dead, and the room wherein the body lay would be opened and the cloth removed from the face, the family would begin a

most frightful howling, which, withal, had in it some melody. They shrieked close into the ears of the dead and stroked the face, asking all manner of questions. Why had he died? Had he not had enough to eat and drink or sufficient clothing? Had not his wife cooked as she ought to or waited well upon him? Had she not been unto him sufficiently beautiful, young, and faithful? And as soon as the corpse once more was covered, would the family dry their tears and laugh and dance merrily together, letting out the smoke of the hut and letting in the swine. For this was the nature of their huts and the custom of their country, at which all of us laughed, and the little Prince often complained right bitterly. Houses that were shown to us as those of nobles were common places of habitation for men, women, children, cows, horses, pigs, ducks, geese and chickens. If the weather were anything cold, all these were shut in together, and how they died not from the stench is more than I can guess.

The Prince told us in bitter mood, though we laughed at him for it, how all one night he must keep a sentry at his door with fixed bayonet to protect him from an old sow and her litter of pigs whom he had driven out from the room in which he would sleep; and though the sentry served to keep out the pigs, he was of no avail for the smell of them. In each house was a huge stove built, as I recall, of some sort of earthenware and often glazed. In this they would build a huge fire which would fill the house no less with smoke than with heat, and though there were in the walls smoke-holes with sliding covers to close them, these would not be opened for fear that

the heat would go out with the smoke. When the fire had sufficiently died down, then would all the inhabitants of the hut climb on top of the stove to sleep in its warmth.

By roads that wound amid these lakes and swamps and their dirty and ill-smelling towns, we came at last to the river Bug, which we had thought to cross on the ice, but through the lateness of the season or the long hard rains the ice had weakened, and this the first horseman who rode on it discovered to his cost, for horse and man fell through and were swept away under the ice by the current; and thereto were we right glad that it was not the King, who often went first at such times.

That day was a crisp winter day without rain, good freezing weather, though there had not been enough to strengthen the ice. This the King thought to do by artificial means before sun down. To this end he spread a broad path of straw across the river on the ice from shore to shore. For men working singly on foot the ice would hold. This straw he wet freely, hoping that by morning it would freeze, which indeed it did, so the next day we did the same thing again and found it strong enough to hold a great weight. Cautiously then we began our crossing and got over well enough, save that near the shores, belike from the warmth of the earth, the ice of our bridge crumbled now and again, and some men were lost by falling into the water and being sucked under the ice. Others went floating down the river on the cakes of ice which had broken off. Some came soon ashore; others were carried out of sight

around the bend below, and I know not when they came ashore, if ever.

But I must leave behind these strange people and their customs, for we resumed our march in the month of May, in the year of our Lord 1706, even as the great battle of Ramillies was being so valiantly fought on the other side of the great empire.

It was August 22 in the afternoon, for I have a note of it in my diary, that we drabants with His Majesty at our head, far in advance of the army, came to the bank of the Oder. The river flowed swift and therewith black and forbidding though it was a bright summer day. As we halted on the bank I told off a reconnaissance party to seek a bridge; but the King countermanded the order, and spurring his horse down the bank, splashed into the stream to swim across. I feared the swiftness of the current, but I knew that remonstrance was of no avail. I followed therefore, as did our whole squadron, in the hope that, if aught befell the King, there would be those of us who might help him. But the current was not so swift as I had thought, and squadron after squadron we swam our horses safely across. Later they found both a bridge and a ford not far from where we crossed, so that we delayed not at the river.

Five days' march beyond the Oder we came into Augustus's electorate. There nought pleased us so much as the richness and the prosperity of the country — the clean white roads winding on the green pastures and rich fields of grain; in truth it was a very paradise after the country that we had been through. Our arrival

was like a thunderbolt from a clear sky, not only to Saxony but to all Europe, as we learned in time, for all were astounded at the speed with which we had made our long march and knew not what fate to expect, for they feared each for himself, and Saxony most of all thought to share the fate of Poland. Great was the terror of the Saxon populace. From their grandparents they had heard of the demolition of Würzen and Pirna and the quartering of the Swedes during thirty long years. Still were the storm-bells of the cities named "Swedebells," and the songs with which children were frightened into obedience, "Swedesongs." The country abounded with infamous writings against the person of our virtue-loving monarch.

Augustus had played his last card. In haste he must now despatch Baron Imhof and the Councillor von Pfingsten to sue for peace on any terms. Blank were the full powers they were given to fill out as best they might, according to the will and pleasure of our gracious King. Such was now Sweden's might! And the Ambassadors assured our Charles that their King had been deceived and led back of the light by evil counsellors, but that he now earnestly berued his mistakes and ardently desired a heart's reconciliation and loving friendship with His Majesty of Sweden.

The burghers of Leipzig, full anxious for their rich city, and the merchants congregated from far and wide for the seven weeks of their great market, came out and knelt with humble supplication before the King. And right disappointed was I, as also my comrades among our officers, that we were not to tarry in the city

Leipzig, in which we had either seen such wonders or else read thereof. For here at this annual market was the place of assembly for everybody of quality in Northern Europe. And since Augustus had become King of Poland, the Polish magnates did also join the merry throng, appearing with much splendor, while the beautiful and lively Polish ladies gave the dances a new and more lively *tempo*. Augustus himself, when present, was surrounded by a great guard of janissaries most curiously dressed in red and white. And these guardsmen were said to entrance the mob by their music of brass cymbals, drums and copper trumpets. Likewise were there operas given at the hostelry of "The Three Swans," and in French upon the high command of the King. These I knew from friends to be attended every afternoon at five o'clock by the German and Polish lords and other persons of quality, after which they went in most beautiful "gala" to the redoubt[1] arranged in the merchants' exchange.

Of other distractions in this lovely city, there were also a great number. One could in fact find there the most remarkable things from all over Europe. There were, I know, fights *à l'anglaise*, between two bears and a bull, to which the spectators might bring their dogs, in order to loose them upon the beasts when they were exhausted fighting. And of course the barking of the dogs awaiting their fun added to the general merriment of the entertainment. There might also be seen wax effigies of the King of France, of the great Mogul and other mighty potentates, and dancers upon the tight

[1] A fashionable assemblage or reception.

rope, who in the open air performed their exercises wonderfully. Here was also the most wonderful of all animals which had never before been seen in Europe, that is, the hippopotamus or horse of the Nile. He had hoofs like unto an ox, and one knows of him that when he becomes too full-blooded and fat and afraid that he will turn sick, he goes into the water. When at last, after diligent search, he has found a sharp thorn, he pricks a huge blood-vessel and bleeds himself, until he feels so relieved and happy he will frisk about and jump. Thereupon the wise hippopotamus stops the bleeding with eelgrass and soft mosses.

During the evenings in Leipzig, many torches are lighted and many gilded chairs are carried through the streets. It swarms with masks in the market-places, and mixing with the happy, care-free voices, are the brawls of the drunkards, the scraping of viols and the sounds of sweet flutes.

"Sachs, Bayer, Schwab, Frank,
Die lieben all den Trank."

Alas, all this was to be left behind!

As was Charles's wont, he set not up his residence in this city, beautiful with its turrets and walls, but a few leagues therefrom, in the old castle of the hamlet of Altranstädt, near the field of Lützen, so glorious through its victory and the hero who had fallen there. To this castle, having quartered our troops, the King rode out with no attendant but myself. As we came to the gate the porter opened it promptly and courteously, but not so obsequiously as to show that he knew who his visitor was. So the King sent word to the Count Hohen-

thiel that he was come to request quarters at the castle for the King of Sweden, and therewith we were ushered into the presence of the count and his lady, in one of the small drawing-rooms off the great hall. They received us with respect and courtesy as officers of His Majesty's army, but it was plain enough that they knew not the King. His Majesty had no mind to enlighten them, and I saw from his smile that he greatly enjoyed the joke.

The count and the lady professed themselves flattered at the opportunity to receive His Majesty, and inquired most anxiously what sort of quarters he would wish. The King declared that His Majesty wanted for himself no more than a small bedroom, however humble, but that he would wish a larger room adjoining or near by for his chancellery. The countess asked most particularly about household arrangements for the King and his suite, and being told of the simplicity of the King's taste, found it hard to believe, and commented thereupon to her husband with a freedom she would never have used had she known to whom she was speaking.

At last when she had learned all else, she inquired when His Majesty would arrive. "He is here," says the King, whereat the lady's confusion was comical to behold and greatly to the King's diversion.

Our King's first act was to ride to the very spot where his great sire fell.[1] There he drew rein and said unto his generals as they all bared their heads, "I have tried to live like unto him: may God in His great mercy, some day grant me even such a glorious death." These

[1] Gustavus Adolphus II. Nov. 6, 1632. — Ed.

words burned into the hearts of those that listened thereto.

And now when King Charles was about ready to name his just conditions, there came the dastardly news that General Mardefeldt, whom King Charles had left behind in Poland with twenty-five hundred men, had been surrounded by a great body of Muscovites and Saxons; that seven hundred Swedes were left upon the battlefield and the remaining eighteen hundred were prisoners of the great allied horde.

Augustus was in a sorry pickle, between the devil and the deep blue sea. For fear of the Muscovites and his Polish subjects, he durst not apprize them of the peace he was about to conclude with the Swedes until he had withdrawn sufficiently from their embarrassing company and land.

The allies, seeing so rare an opportunity to fall upon Mardefeldt's small detachment and he himself burning for a fight whate'er the odds against him, poor Augustus knew no other way, except secretly to despatch couriers unto Mardefeldt and apprize him of the impending peace, begging him for the love of God to withdraw. The distraught Augustus further declared which roads would be clear and open to the Swedes. But Mardefeldt, having heard naught from his King except the command to fight like the devil incarnate whenever the opportunity might offer or be made, answered Augustus that he believed not his trickery. It thus fared with King Augustus as with the fox in the fable, when he wished to be honest and could gain no trust.

So the Swedes fought, and, even Augustus confessed,

would have conquered had not their Polish allies turned tail and run, leaving the Swedish flanks all exposed where the fighting raged the hardest. The Saxon Ambassadors were nigh fit for bedlam, so great was their anguish at the unhappy turn affairs had taken. Quickly did Augustus leave his allies behind, buying from them all of their prisoners and sending them to our camp with all manner of polite compliment.

At last, in the month of September, the great peace was signed, though for some time the conditions were not published, in order that King Augustus might deceive his good Muscovite ally, and finger the goodly sum of money expected from the Muscovites, before the secret became known. The printers in Dresden, when they read the terms, durst not for shame and the consequences print the articles of peace. But our dragoons soon came to their relief.

The ambassadors were in the King's chamber awaiting his final answer. "Gentlemen," said Charles, "you shall have it in a moment."

Then Charles withdrew into his cabinet, but returning shortly, ordered read aloud, that the King of Sweden would give peace on the following conditions: —

First: That King Augustus renounce forever the crown of Poland; that he recognize Stanislaus as legitimate King, and that Augustus promise never to think of reascending the Polish throne, no, not even in case of King Stanislaus's death.

Secondly: That King Augustus declare void all treaties, and most especially those made with the Muscovite.

Thirdly: That he send with honor unto the Swedish camp the Princes of the House of Sobieski, and all prisoners he has ever taken.

Fourthly: That he deliver up all deserters which have passed into his service, and especially Johan Patkul, and that he cease all procedure against those of his army which have passed over to the Swedish.

As they left the royal presence, their hearts as stones within them, we could but say with the Prophet, "Blessed be the name of the Lord for ever and ever; he removeth kings and setteth up kings."

The peace was soon, though secretly, ratified, whereupon Charles, never lacking in kingly courtesy, wrote in this manner to Augustus, in reply to a letter in which Augustus had assured him that the crown of Poland was of no value to him, compared with the friendship of his cousin: —

ALTRANSTÄDT, *October* 24, 1706.

SERENEST AND ALMIGHTY KING:
FRIENDLY AND MUCH BELOVED COUSIN, BROTHER AND NEIGHBOR!

It has been no little cause of dissatisfaction unto me, that until now I have lain in misunderstanding with so near a relation and so close a friend.

Now, however, I experience all the greater joy and satisfaction, since Your Majesty so genuinely declares that Your Majesty desires the resumption of complete friendship and confidence, and there is opened unto me the opportunity I have desired to render Your Majesty proof of my constant friendship, which in earlier times has not been afforded me.

I have thus in detail expressed myself to Your Majesty's Ministers who have handed me your valued letter, and I further assure Your Majesty that I shall ever exert myself to show my devotion and will constantly remain

Your Majesty's most friendly disposed Cousin and brother,
CAROLUS.

A BITTER PILL

The bitterest pill of all which Augustus must perforce swallow was the letter he must despatch, after much urging, to Stanislaus. Thus it read: —

"Monsieur et Frère, —

Nous avions jugé qu'il n'était pas nécessaire d'entrer dans un commerce particulier de lettres avec Votre Majesté; cependant, pour faire plaisir à sa Majesté Suédoise, et afin qu'on ne nous impute pas que nous faisons difficulté de satisfaire à son désir, nous vous félicitons par celle-ci de votre avénement à la couronne, et nous souhaitons que vous trouviez dans votre patrie des sujets plus fidèles que ceux que nous y avons laissés.

Tout le monde nous fera la justice de croire que nous n'avons été payés que d'ingratitude pour tous nos bienfaits, et que la plupart de nos sujets ne se sont appliqués qu'à avancer notre ruine. Nous souhaitons que vous ne soyez pas exposé à de pareils malheurs, vous remettant à la protection de Dieu.

Monsieur mon frère,

Votre bon frère et voisin,

Auguste, Roi.[1]

The despatch of such a note was indeed draining the bitter cup to its very dregs and swallowing the last crust of humble pie. But not without reason did this

[1] Sire, My Brother:

In our judgment there was no necessity of our entering into a private correspondence with Your Majesty; nevertheless to please His Swedish Majesty, and that it may not be imputed to us that we make a difficulty of complying with his demands, we congratulate Your Majesty by these presents on your coming to the crown, and we wish at the same time that you may find in your country more faithful and obedient subjects than those whom we left there. All the world will do us the justice to own that all our kindnesses, all our indefatigable cares, have been repaid only with ingratitude, and that the greatest part of our subjects made it their whole business to form parties against us to our ruin.

Recommending Your Majesty to the Divine protection, we wish you may not be exposed to a like reverse of fortune.

Sire, my brother,

Your good brother and neighbor,

Augustus, R.

proud monarch speak in these terms of his relations with his turbulent Polish subjects. As a last pleasant reminder of his kingship, it was suggested to him, in unmistakable language, that he forthwith return into the royal treasury the regalia and precious stones he had deemed it prudent to transport into the safe keeping of his fortress of Königstein.

How gladly would we now have returned unto the dear Swedish shores, where the white birches with their emerald leaves were mirroring themselves in the waters beneath them! Indeed our hearts yearned to return to our fatherland after so many years of fighting and marches. But alas, our beloved Monarch lent but a deaf ear unto every advance of the Muscovite emissaries, and would listen neither to the good Englishman, Robinson, nor to our own Piper. Having made Augustus harmless, he must in his own silent heart turn his thoughts unto the Turks and the Kossacks and the crushing of the Muscovite with their assistance. Here was a second Alexander, which had sprung up 'mid the northern snows.

But what availed us all our hankering? We common folk and soldiers did not presume to have thoughts and opinions in great matters of state, and we all were but obedient subjects of our great King, given unto him by God for him to do with as he in his wisdom deemed fit. Nevertheless we could not but sigh for our homes, despite the fat rations and good pay that now made both purse and belly swell. Why, even the common soldier received two pounds of meat, three pounds of bread, a measure of green goods, half a pound of fat

or butter, and therewith three cans of beer a day. Full royal fare was this, for the dogs who had grown lean and mangy in six years of hard toil.

Strict and decent were, however, the orders which were given unto our soldiers that they should be a pride rather than a reproach unto our nation; and here when all Europe was gazing with wonder upon the gallant army which had emerged from the wild life of years of victory, they might also speak of the boys in blue as models in times of peace.

So King Charles issued orders that all hunting as well within as without woods and fields and parks was absolutely forbidden, and all fishing with nets, as likewise the gathering of fruits in the gardens and the vineyards, without immediate payment for what was so taken. And everyone was further strictly charged to forbear beating his host or his host's domestics or doing them any kind of injury, much less to rob or pillage in the public roads or private lanes, in the streets or inns of the towns or villages or to commit any other violence whatever. Certificates of decent behavior in the soldiers were to be procured by the officers of each regiment from the Saxon housekeepers and bailiffs and chief officers of each village where our men were quartered. Indeed, the conduct of our soldiers became so excellent that the Saxon housewives need no longer place the latchet upon the door, and a common soldier quartered in a peasant's hut might share the room with the daughter, and in smiling at her from his couch mean naught but friendly recognition. If one of our men stole or in aught infringed the regulations, he was forthwith shot,

while the one wronged was given the clothes from off his body and his goods within the house.

The terms of peace were carried out instanter. The Princes Sobieski were fetched in much state and honor from their fortress, and both King Charles and King Stanislaus made much of their Highnesses. And King Augustus restored all of which he had deprived them, thus atoning for their many and grievous wrongs. They were not jealous of the great dignity which had fallen to Stanislaus during their imprisonment, though it had been that of their father of glorious memory. Then came the turn of the arch villain, Patkul, who had taken sanctuary among the King's enemies, and who had originally stirred up all the trouble, and with his traitorous tricks constantly fanned the flame whenever the embers seemed dying down and going out.

General Patkul has made so much noise in the world and his death was so remarkable, that it may not be amiss to give some account of the end of that most unfortunate fellow. After King Augustus and the Tsar of the Muscovites had put their heads together at Grodno, the rascal had under King Augustus's free disposition journeyed into Switzerland, where he had, with sufficient cunning, betrothed himself to a rich and noble yet foolish widow who had fallen a victim to the blandishments of his person. Though he had permitted Patkul to gain her, Augustus believed it wise not to allow the fellow too slack a rope, but had him seized and conveyed to his safe fortress of Sonnenstein. There at last he was given over to us, and we conveyed him to our camp in a closed wagon, in the bottom of which we had bored

holes in order that he might have some air upon the road. King Charles knew him full well to be still a Muscovite ambassador; but had he not also been born a Swedish subject?

A court martial was then ordered, at which the Field-Marshal Rehnsköld presided, and where we might all see the traitor. He seemed an old fellow, thick and fat, with a red suit covered richly with golden galloons. He was awarded his just deserts. After the trial was ended, a Swedish officer, who was acting as clerk, read with a high voice a paper upon which were these words:

> Be it known that the express order of His Majesty, our most lenient and merciful Master, is: That this man, who has been proven a traitor unto his country, be broken and quartered as a reparation for his crimes and an example unto others. May all guard themselves from treason and serve their King faithfully!

When his final hour came, it being on Michaelmas Day, the priest who had brought him consolation, did say unto him even as the prophet Isaiah did unto King Hezekiah, "Set thy house in order, for thou must die and not outlive to-morrow." He was then carried barefooted upon a rack, with no other clothes than his shirt and breeches, and above him was held a picture of the wheel upon which he was about to be broken. His right arm was first struck, but, as it took the executioner three mighty strokes to sever it from the body, Patkul thereat shrieked quite loudly, crying withal incessantly the name of Jesus, thus continuing until both arms and legs had been broken. And altogether he received fifteen blows. The captain who was commanding at the

affair cried unto the executioner to direct the strokes at his breast. The poor sinner then cast his eyes upon the captain, praying, "For the love of God, strike off my head, strike off my head!" which therefore also the captain ordered. Now that the executioner would help Patkul towards the block, the fellow rolled himself to it and laid his head thereupon. It took three good strokes before the head fell off.

"Away with the knave and the traitor!" cried all those that stood near by. Thereupon the body was chopped into four parts, which we stuck upon poles on the hillside, and a complete account of his miserable and well-deserved end was sent into Sweden and one into Germany, and one to Patkul's affianced bride.

I will say, I observed that the army was melancholy during this execution. Nobody found pleasure in it; I also took note there was not the usual cheerfulness among us for some time afterwards. But the King had had great provocations.

Our camp at Altranstädt resembled not the quarters of Augustus in Dresden or Leipzig. In the field before the castle, where lodged His Gracious Majesty, stood the royal horses, with scarcely any halters, and sacking in place of proper blankets. And there were neither racks nor mangers. The horses had their coats rough, as also their bellies, their buttocks and their switchy tails. The King's bed-chamber was a small dirty room with bare walls, and to his bed there was neither canopy nor sheets. But the same quilt which he had under him, it being long, he was also wont to turn up over him. His writing table, thereby, was a board with but a stick to

lend it support, and in place of a standish, there was but a poor wooden thing with a sand-box of the same. By the bedside lay, however, the fine gilt Bible, and this was the only thing that looked fine in His Majesty's equipment.

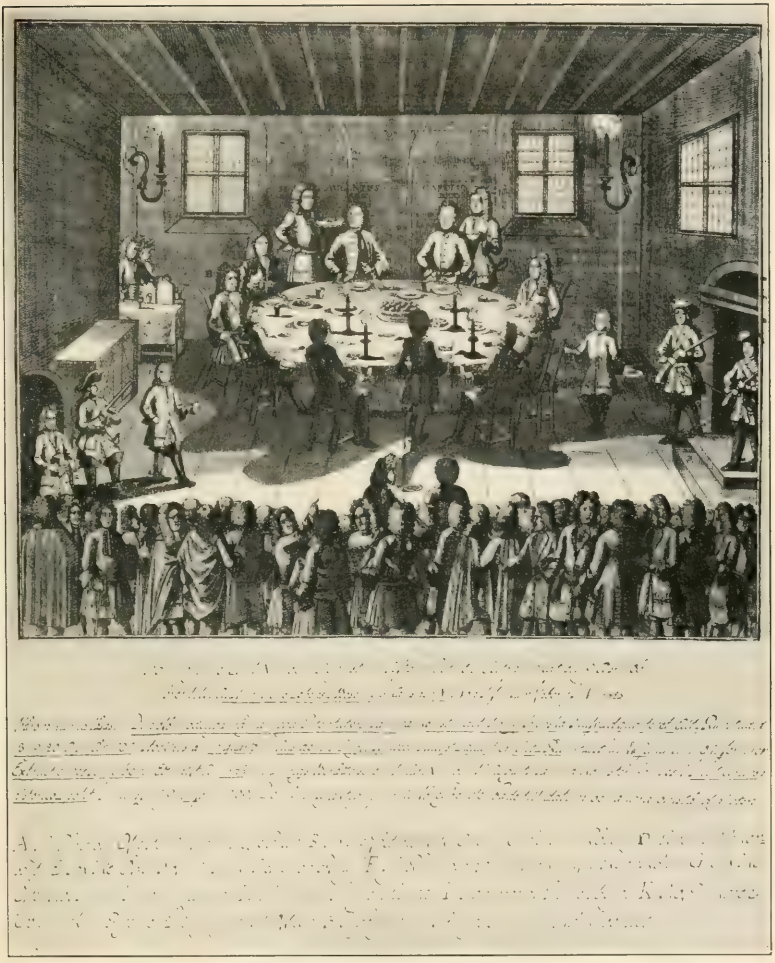
Now came the time when King Augustus and the princes and ministers from all the lands of Europe were to come to our humble quarters to pay their court unto Sweden's warrior king. Six horses drew King Augustus's royal equipage; when he came, our King, having received no notification, was in the stable a-watching the currying of the horses and the polishing of his pistols near-by. So he must run up the courtyard and stair, and when they met, the two monarchs embraced each other with a tenderness which touched all the spectators, and many among the two royal suites attested with tears how moved they were at these expressions of friendship. It was strange to mark the difference between the strict Calvinist of the North and the other, over whom gallantry ever held sway.

My tutor had told me, when I was a lad, much about the Elector Augustus, as he then was styled. Even before he had learned to read, he knew several beautiful small prayers, and in the fourth year of his age, the catechism of the learned Doctor Martin was imprinted upon his soul. But all that was long ago and somewhat changed, and I was now all agog to see what he looked like.

Augustus was clad in a magnificent, gold-embroidered coat and waistcoat covered with pearls and precious stones. King Charles's plain blue coat was stained from

the morning ride, and indeed it was hard for the dust to recognize the yellow of the skirts pinned up before and behind. The old leather waistcoat and breeches, though not, as some would have it, sufficiently greasy to be fried, were still quite nasty. Having not been gallanting or himself gone a-calling, he had no new clothes upon his person; his gloves were as stiff as horn and his colossal rusty spurs stuck out from behind his worn-down heels.

With their arms around each other, the two brotherly monarchs forthwith went in to the board, where the conversation fell upon great boots. King Augustus having remarked the extraordinary size of those our own monarch had on, King Charles said that he had worn his nigh unto six years, and that at times he would bed with them, because of the enemy being in the vicinity. Thereupon Augustus remarked that the room was dark, for upon the table stood but four candles while the great wax lights in the brasses under the beams gave but scant light below. By the doors stood the drabants, motionless, with swords drawn at attention. The Chamberlain Klingenstierna served King Augustus, while behind King Charles stood the Chamberlain Gustaf Guntherfeldt. When he took in the tin dishes, a ringing sound was heard, which at first aroused the curiosity of the Saxon monarch. Guntherfeldt then showed his hands to the King, which were of iron with fingers and joints that could artfully move; they had been skilfully wrought by a Frenchman learned in such matters, and strapped upon his wrists, after his own hands had been struck off by a mighty blow at the



CHARLES XII AND AUGUSTUS THE STRONG SUPPING TOGETHER IN ALTRANSTÄDT, DECEMBER 7, 1706

From a Contemporary Engraving

Battle of Kliszow in 1702. Facing the monarchs on the other side of the round table stood the court page, Cronmark, carving the steak which had hurriedly been prepared for this great occasion.

Then they went into their private chamber and talked full lengthily of matters which concerned not others; but we, who stood without, suspected Augustus of attempting unsuccessfully many a wily question. But neither King Augustus nor his allies — nor the other European statesmen, for all of that — were to divine the riddle of our Charles's mind. He hid without difficulty his remarkable memory, and showed not his great shrewdness. Nor perhaps did our young monarch comprehend what of greatness lay in his cousin's nature. For though amid all pleasures, his favorite was love, yet had he assisted greatly the trade and welfare of his country and made his city of Leipzig into the finest market in all Germany.

And when night came, King Charles took his Bible out of his bedroom, wishing that King Augustus should sleep in his bed, which we hurriedly prepared with such soft and scented linen and sheets as could be borrowed from out the chests of the castle. And Charles slept outside on a soldier's cot.

The presence of our great and seasoned army was indeed causing such uneasiness at the courts of Europe, that they all sent princes and ministers a-scurrying to Altranstädt to find out the intentions of our King. The mighty struggle for the Spanish monarchy was at its height, and it seemed scarce possible that the matter should be of no concern unto Sweden. Whichever side

so great a king with such invincible soldiers might favor would surely be victorious. Both Louis and the allies must thus forthwith seek to fathom the mysterious designs of the taciturn northern conqueror.

While it had been King Charles's wont in active service to refuse flatly to see either ambassadors or ministers, this strict rule was set aside on this occasion, and the foreigners were here admitted instead of having, as earlier to their chagrin and despair, their papers referred to Stockholm and the powerless councillors there who sat a-sucking their thumbs. To the city of Leipzig this junketing of ministers and princes was a great blessing, for not only did the populace see their brave equipages and fine followers, but they reaped much advantage from the ducats they spent. Thus did His Majesty hold a magnificent court, attended by both powers and lords of the empire, with ambassadors and residents of foreign princes.

Among these notables came also our friend the Reverend John Robinson, who had been near the Court of Sweden full thirty years, and could therefore, to the great satisfaction of our King, discourse in our own tongue. He came now to announce the arrival of His Grace Duke John of Marlborough, victor of both Blenheim and Ramillies, than whom, with the exception of our own Charles, there was no greater general in all the armies of Europe. Not only by his English friends, but also by the allies in England, and above all by the Court of Vienna, had he been importuned to visit our monarch and attempt to penetrate Charles's designs.

When he arrived, our King was at church, it being of a Sunday. While the duke spoke in English, Robin-

son forcibly put his words into the Swedish. And the Duke said: —

I present to Your Majesty a letter, not from the chancery, but from the heart of the Queen, my mistress, and written with her own hand. Had not her sex prevented it, she would have crossed the sea to see the prince admired by the whole universe. I am in this particular more happy than the Queen, and wish I could serve some campaigns under so great a general as Your Majesty, that I might learn what I yet want to know of the art of war.

When now King Charles had answered the duke, the latter spoke in French, whereunto King Charles replied in Swedish. They then dined but did not speak unto each other at dinner; my Lord Duke only spoke to Count Welling on his other side, very low, in the French tongue. The duke seemed much surprised at the manner in which the table was served. The repast lasted, according to custom, but quarter of an hour. Besides John Robinson and Piper and Hermelin and the marshals and some of the foremost generals, there was also George Stepney, the British Ambassador to Poland. He kept his eyes open, for we opened the letter he writ that night to London-town, wherein he said: —

King Charles began his dinner with a great piece of bread and butter, having stuck a coarse napkin under his chin. He drank with his mouth full, out of a great old-fashioned beaker, small beer, which seemed his only liquor at the meal. He drank about two English bottles, for I noted he emptied his beaker twice. Between every bit of meat he swallowed a piece of bread and butter, which he first had spread with his great thumb. He was no more than a quarter of an hour at the table and when he arose, his drabants, or life-guards, sat down to the same table for the same victuals. As for King Stanislaus, whom I left this morn, he is tall, young and hand-

some, wearing whiskers in the Polish dress, but inclined to be fat, and a little upon the dirty, as all Poles are.

After dinner His Grace of Marlborough continued discussing the state of Europe with our King, during which Count Piper could not refrain from shedding tears at the very pathetical expressions His Grace used to assure the King of Her Majesty's friendship; and thus they continued, His Grace discoursing, His Majesty listening, and His Excellency weeping, until the kettle-drums announced the hour of prayer, when King Charles took leave and retired to his customary devotions, His Majesty reversing the adage by remarking upon parting, to the duke's lively satisfaction, that no war was ever bad and no peace ever good.

The very next day, my Lord Duke set out for a call upon Piper and Hermelin, trusting here to accomplish much that might balk any plans laid by King Louis, or bribes he might have sent. Indeed, the Elector of Hanover wished His Grace to intimate that an annual pension of £2000 to Piper and £1000 to Hermelin would not be counted by him at all out of place.[1]

[1] "I was at Guntersdorff, where Count Piper resided, when my Lord Duke came thither to dine with Count Piper. I had waited at the King's table at Altranstädt the day before, when my Lord Duke dined there. He arrived at Guntersdorff accompanied by Baron Goertz, who was with him in his coach. Count Piper, piqued at the confidence the duke reposed in Baron Goertz, made him wait some time at the door, before coming to receive him. The duke, shocked at this, as soon as he saw the count at his door, opened the coach at the other side, and goes to make water against the wall of a garden opposite the count's house, leaving him in turn to wait a considerable time; at last he turned about to salute the count, who conducted him into his house, where they dined with great ceremony. The duke sat between Countess Piper and Mrs. Robinson." This anecdote was given Colonel Klingspor by the chamberlain, Gustavus Adlerfeld, who was an eyewitness on this occasion at Guntersdorff. — Ed.

Then there came also the Baron Bossenwald from France as envoy. He had passed through the empire disguised as a merchant; and likewise the Sieur de Ricoux from the Court of King Louis, with great bags of gold hid among his coffers. From Bavaria came the Count de Monasterole; while on New Year's Day, as bearers of many a greeting, came the Duke of Saxe-Gotha and all the princes of the House of Saxony. A great number of princes and many nobles and gentlemen of high rank, accompanied by a large number of ladies, who were by His Majesty's permission come out from Sweden to comfort and distract their husbands, all made the assemblies extremely agreeable and brilliant.

As His Majesty objected not that all the world might have free access to see him at dinner, Altranstädt was every day filled with an immense number of people, and the hall where the King dined was often so crowded that not only we officers of the household, but also the domestics and pages, found it difficult to perform their duties decently. The spectators for want of room stood upon stools and in the windows to get sight of His Majesty. Here they might, if of proper deportment, unchastened by the drabants on guard, see His Majesty and his generals sitting silently at the round board partaking of their modest fare.

There would at times also be dancing, during which King Charles would stand silent by the walls. Suddenly the desire to dance would seize upon him, and most curious would it be to observe how His Majesty then would deport himself. With his long steps he would

stride across the hall, and without saying a word, he grabs hold of a lady and then rushes round as hard as he can with the female a-hanging after him, with no heed or observation of tempo for the fiddlers. And with this he would fling about the poor wretch with whom he was dancing so that she flew as helplessly as a hairy mitten, till at last she was flung onto a bench and the dance was over. Well she remembered throughout her life that she had danced with King Charles the Twelfth. Nor was His Majesty particular whom he thus honored, for to him the first was the best one, were she a young and buxom noblewoman or an old and shy burgher dame. With womenfolk as with horses, he had no preference, as long as their legs would keep up with the pace he set.

And who should now come a-calling, thinking this perchance a better opportunity for the storming of King Charles's heart, but the lovely Countess Aurora who had taken quarters in the city of Leipzig. Once more would she speak a fair word in favor of the God of Love and offer herself as his priestess. She came a-driving to our quarters in the most wonderful gilded and painted coach, drawn by three pairs of snow-white palfreys, from among the best in his Saxon Majesty's stables.

The King, who was at table, hearing the noise without, looked from the window and then walked rapidly back into the garden, leaving orders to his page Klingenstierna that he would not see the hussy. And as she entered, a vision of all sweetness, like the dewy rose of early morn, she saw no one but the page, for all the

officers had withdrawn with His Majesty. And knowing naught better to do, the Countess executed that divinest of all womanly acts, and implanted upon the rosy lips of the astonished and enraptured page a full sweet kiss. Then went she about in the King's bedchamber and left upon his great Bible a miniature of herself in her prioress' robe, set in a wreath of diamonds. For many a night the page was heard a-sighing in his sleep, wishing, I dare say, he might have been King, though as for the kingdom itself, he would have dispensed with it. This was the last we saw of the lovely Aurora.

It was no easy matter to keep the old and new kings of Poland from meeting, for Stanislaus's quarters were not far from our camp, and from that he must often go gallanting, through the jolly streets of Leipzig. One day upon the baker's street, they came all of a sudden upon each other; King Augustus's horse making a false step at that moment, they must stop, but Augustus, whipping his horse, passed swiftly, after the two had saluted one another full civilly with their hats, and their cavaliers doing likewise as they saw their masters do.

A-stag-hunting with King Augustus, Charles would not go, for he liked not the complexion of the invitation. So instead he sat himself down to write to his sister, who had just sent him preserved orange-peel in a big stone jar. Indeed his love for her seemed to be a worship, as was his veneration for his father's memory and his blessed mother's angelic virtues.

So he wrote: —

SERENEST PRINCESS:

MOST GRACIOUS, DEAR SISTER:—

The principal errand I come this time to make, is to ask my heart's dearest sister to keep constantly for me her so priceless grace. . . .

There was naught remarkable in our last campaign. The army made several long marches in distant countries, but only some parties have been so fortunate as to deliver battle. Since the army has come here into Saxony, it has had lazy days. We have mostly been busied with scribbling. King Augustus is sick a-bed. So his Queen has come to him. He lives now here in Leipzig, which lies a mile from Altranstädt. He is jolly and amusing. He is not very large, but well-knit together; somewhat corpulent is he also. He wears his own hair, which is quite dark. I am so sorry for the good Greta Wrangel.[1] It would have been well if she had lived longer. She was always lively and diverting. Since Count John [2] and she are dead, there is without doubt much less joy in this world. . . .

My Heart writes in her letter of talk concerning my marriage. I must then confess that I am married to the mob of soldiers with whom I fain must live through good and evil days. Otherwise, all of us who are here in this army seek to avoid marriage. For this is completely forbidden in the whole army, both during the time it was in Poland, as well as since we have come here into Saxony. No one dares do contrary to what once has been ordained, and so wholesomely ordered.

I remain constantly until my death,
My Heart's sister's obedient, humblest, true brother and servant

CAROLUS.

I beg my respects to little Carl F. and to all the womenfolk.

[1] Daughter of the field-marshal, a great favorite at Court, and beloved for her good humor.

[2] Count John Stenbock, the old marshal of the realm, with whom the King as a boy played so many pranks.

Thus we stayed until spring and summer had come, our King daring not trust King Augustus to fulfil the terms of the treaty in case he moved out of the country and wishing to refresh and strengthen our regiments.

But now came a pot of trouble to us from the Court of the Emperor. Baron Strahlenheim, His Majesty's ambassador, was dining late in Vienna, and among the fine folk was the Austrian chamberlain, Count Zobor. Now he was far too loose with his words, making free to state that there were three troublemongers in Europe — Rokaczy, Stanislaus, — and still another. And the baron naturally demanding to know who that other might be, high words arose, tending towards a challenge. The baron holding forth his hand to the count to accept this, he sitting opposite him leaned over and gave the baron a sound box upon the ear, after which there arose a great uproar and hubbub, but the assembled nobles prevented the count and baron from any further violence. Though the count on the morrow was spirited away to a prison, this was far from appeasing King Charles for the insult offered to his ambassador.

There were other grievous matters of complaint against the Emperor Joseph, whose gallantry *à l'outrance* was no secret, and of which the whole world was cognizant.

The Muscovite soldiers whom King Augustus was to have given us had quietly disappeared into Austrian lands — and Emperor Joseph's offer of a chest of gold wherewith to recompense us for their miserable hides met with the haughty reply from our King, "Memini me Alexandrum, non mercatorum."

Now was the King of Sweden once more to declare himself the protector of the Evangelical faith. For the many suffering Protestants living scattered throughout the Emperor's Silesian lands had most grievously been robbed of those privileges and that freedom wherein they could declare their faith and worship unmolested according to the promises and pledges of the Peace of Westphalia. The vile Jesuits, practising their black arts and sly and heinous propaganda, had robbed them of their churches, closed their schools, and forbidden them to hold their services under penalty of dire persecution and punishment. So they turned unto our great-hearted Charles, knowing full well that, despite the power of the Emperor, he would with his mighty sword and for the love of his Protestant faith, uphold their righteous cause. This was no matter for easy parley or simple arrangement, for our soldiers were ready instanter to march into the lands of the Emperor, and a pretty state of affairs would this have brought about throughout the chanceries of Europe. The Emperor's ambassador must in his distraught condition write unto his master this impertinent message: —

Je ne vous scaurais assez faire comprendre les difficultés qui se rencontrent dans ma commission. Car les flatteries infinies, et qui sont allées au delà de tout ce qu'on se peut imaginer, ont tellement gâté l'esprit de ce jeune Roy et une grande partie de sa cour, qu'ils ne se connoissent pour ainsi dire, eux-memes, et qu'ils ne savent point ou s'arrêter où à quoi se resoudre.

And again had he the audacity to write: —

I have not to do with a reasonable being but with quite a wild creature, not to use harsher terms in speaking of an

anointed head. I cannot give such humors opportunity to hit upon new machinations.

There seeming no way to find peace, we all prepared ourselves for a peep at the Imperial City of Vienna. Then, in his great despair, Wratislaw, begging us to wait but over a last courier, wrote unto his master: —

The King will march in four days. As I durst not promise the restitution of the confiscated churches, he will certainly invade the hereditary lands of Your Imperial Majesty. Whether he can later be got out again, God Almighty alone knows. I write to no one with this courier, that the world may have no suspicion, and I beg Your Majesty to summon your ministers without delay and to deliberate over this matter *in instanti*, sending me the answer immediately. For however speedily I receive Your Imperial Majesty's decision, I fear it may be too late. The *momenta temporis* are so precious, but the royal humor obstinate, and those friendly disposed towards the French without number.[1]

Joseph yielded, and to the followers of the Augsburg Confession in Silesia were their ecclesiastical rights and privileges restored, despite the curses and threats of Jesuits and Papal legates. Well might Joseph impatiently reply unto their importunities that they had better sing a *Te Deum* that Charles had not required him to turn Lutheran, for verily he should not have known what to do.

[1] Der König wird in vier Tagen marschieren. Und weil ich die Restitution der abgenommenen Kirchen nicht kann versprechen, so wirdt er ohnfehlbar in E.K.M. Erblander einbrechen. Ob man ihn nach her wirdt können herausbringen, weiss Gott der Allmächtiger allein. Ich schreibe an Niemandten durch diesen Courier um die Welt nicht zu sich berufen, und ich bitte E. M. wollen alsogleich dero ministros lassen zu sich berufen und in instanti derüber deliberiren, also dann mir gleich die Antwort schicken. Dann so geschwindt als ich E.K.M. Resolution erhalte, so fürchte ich doch dass es wird, zu spät seyn. Die momenta temporis sind so pretiös, der Königshumor aber obstinat, und die französisch Gesinte ohnzahl.

This last matter having been thus so happily terminated to the joy of all, they struck in Sweden a medal on which was engraved the head of our great King and above it was inscribed, "CAROLUS XII. D. G. REX SUECIA. *Ad coelum liberiore via*"; and beneath, "*Sacris Silesiae Evangelicæ restitutis.* A.D., MDCCVII."

Then, after keeping a day of fasting and prayer, we sent our womenfolk home to Sweden, said good-bye to many of our good pastors, and prepared to break camp. This was, however, no easy matter, for a swarm of children belonging to the doubtful women who had joined our camp from all over Germany were everywhere deposited upon our horse-blankets and capes. Indeed they lay so thick around our tents that it was with difficulty we or our horses did not step upon them. They were finally collected in the great commissary vans, and with their mothers driven into the city of Leipzig for safe keeping.

Now our King, having had enough of party-making and being ever courteous, would not leave Saxony without paying his final respects to King Augustus and thanking him for his long hospitality. So when the army once more reached the great river, King Charles suddenly left, accompanied only by Colonel Hård and a few drabants, and rode straight to the gates of Dresden, which was the Saxon capital by the Elbe, where the horrible spectre, now known as "The Dresden Monk," made his appearance some ten years before the time whereof I relate, dressed with his flowing robe and hood around him, carrying under one arm his own

severed head, and with the other hand a lantern. At the customs, King Charles's officers gave their names without hesitation, but His Majesty, in order to surprise his cousin, gave the name of "the soldier Charles." As they rode across the Newmarket, the Minister Fleming, who was standing by his window, came bustling down greatly alarmed at what he saw, but had albeit sufficient presence of mind to embrace His Majesty's leg and make a profound reverence, which brought a throng of the townspeople running.

King Augustus who had that day taken much strong medicine, and as a consequence felt not right well, was sitting in his nightshirt in an apartment adjoining the royal bed-chamber, where he amused himself watching the drilling of the horses in the courtyard below. When, to his amazement, he beheld his royal visitor, he hurriedly ordered his gilded breeches and silken stockings put on, and while King Charles made his reverence to the Queen and mother, his dressing proceeded, so that he could mount a horse beside his Swedish cousin. And he ordered at once all the cannons upon the city walls to be fired, while the guards beat their drums and blew their silver trumpets. The streets were now so filled with the shouting, jubilant populace that the soldiers were obliged to make way for the two monarchs, as King Augustus accompanied King Charles full half a mile without the walls. We were mighty glad when we saw his foaming horse come galloping into camp, for we liked not his trusting himself within the lion's mouth.

And as we marched through Silesia, the tidings of our

great peace with the Emperor having spread as wildfire through the country districts, the good Lutherans collected around our regiments with cries of joy, and kneeling along the sides of the road, they blessed our great King as he passed them by, the tears streaming in gratitude down their faces. In the morning and evening their children, who would march with us by day, could join with us in our Lutheran hymns they knew and loved so well. I have heard tell that even now, so many years since those glorious days, the children in those lands have a game wherein they range themselves as soldiers in a circle around their pastor, and pray and sing as did the Swedish soldiers they saw in the summer of 1707.

Once more we turned our steps toward Poland and the dark, unknown Muscovy behind her — the finest and greatest army Sweden ever had; 45,000 horse and foot, commanded by brave and gallant officers, men of as much experience and conduct as any in the world; and all men who know anything of war know good officers make a good army. They were indeed as fine a body of gentlemen as ever I saw together in my life, their horses without comparison, and their equipages the finest and best in the world, and their persons Swedes, which, I think, is enough to say of them. Our last great enemy, Peter, was to be conquered.

CHAPTER XIV

THE MARCH TOWARDS MOSKOWA

In Europe there were two great monarchs, Louis the Fourteenth and Charles the Twelfth. But while Louis of France, himself great in statecraft, would in war place his confidence in his great generals, our Charles, the greatest general of his time, would, alas, give no heed unto the counsels of his ministers. And what profiteth it a country in the end, if statesmanship walketh not hand in hand with the sword?

Now was the beginning of that great campaign in which Sweden's soldiers were to march and fight and march, even as far as the crow would fly were he to spread his wings from Copenhagen unto the Papists' holy city of Rome. Indeed some have murmured that we were resignedly led as lambs unto the slaughter — but never has more wonderful and glorious campaign been conducted by any nation or general, if we perhaps except Alexander leading his phalanxes through the sandy deserts into the plains of far-off India. For two long years were Sweden's soldiers to show an endurance and obedience never before equalled in the most glorious annals of military history. Indeed, it seems to me now, when far from the shock and enthusiasm of battle, a great and irreparable tragedy, that such genius for command, such fortitude and temperance as were possessed by His Majesty could not have brought our poor country other fruit than imperishable memories and

a swelling pride of race that neither time nor national disaster can ever destroy. Little thought did his gracious Majesty give to the great price our poor little country was so cheerfully paying, or to the empty coffers at home. In these years between Narva and Poltava, three hundred thousand soldiers, the finest and bravest men in Europe, left Sweden and Finland and our Baltic provinces, and only seventy thousand of them were ever able to crawl back to the starving ones waiting at home. Of the mercenary troops that fell by the thousand under the Swedish banners I have no knowledge. Nor wot I much as to the thousands of good artisans and peace-abiding peasants who were led into Muscovite captivity and slavery from out of our Baltic provinces.

After our valiant King had been laid forever to rest amid his great sires, there were indeed those who grumbled and made complaint, as is ever the case when a great man is gone. They dared voice the opinion that he held in too great esteem his supernatural mission and protection, and would with narrow and obstinate, well-nigh insane resolution, give no heed unto either the councils of his generals or of the fat little wiseacre, Piper. An adventurer, would they say, an adventurer, stubbornly and blindly set upon his own plans. But they never felt the glad thrill as the Swedish bugles blew to storm; they never knew the shock of conflict nor saw one army after the other flee before the banners of the Lion of the North. Never will they know how great was His Majesty's art, how swiftly and clearly would he form his plans, and deliberately carry them out; how patiently he could wait for the moment to come, and

then spring upon his prey like the king of beasts. Surely, no general ever demanded such sacrifice of his men; but in equal measure did he give himself, and his only love was Sweden.

But I must return to my tale, for I was now about to tell how His Majesty led his great army out of Saxony and Silesia and once more into Poland. After our regiments had marched into Saxony, Muscovite soldiers, whom it had been so hard for us to hit upon, sprang up all over Poland, as do mushrooms in the meadow after the autumn rains; and Peter now played master in the republic. King Charles decided to march upon Moskowa; though this bold plan he hid deep within his own heart, and no questions from his generals could unseal his lips. Had not Fredrik been brought to his knees when the Swedish soldiers stood before the gates of Copenhagen, and Augustus become as pliable as the housewife's dough, when our kettledrums could be heard from the walls of Dresden?

The councillors and generals implored him to return to the Baltic provinces, now so hard pressed, with much territory in the hands of the enemy, and the great cities all conquered or destroyed. There, they argued, could supplies be easily sent unto us from Sweden, and were it not better to free and defend what was our own than to enter upon so tremendous and desperate a campaign so hopelessly far from all help or fresh supplies? But Heaven, when the ruin of a person or a party is determined, always so infuriates their counsels as to make them instrumental to it themselves. Were he to strike at the heart of the Muscovite power, His Majesty be-

lieved, all the limbs would shortly wither and drop off, and he understood that in eastern Europe it was but a question of two powers, whether Sweden were to be master or the great Muscovite Empire, which was slowly growing conscious of its strength. The settling of mastership in east Europe must come now, once and forever, and King Charles understood full well that the conflict that was to come would be far greater than any he and our soldiers ere now had faced. The campaign in Poland was to be of an entirely different sort from any previous one. Tsar Peter saw he must abandon all hope of peace, for of such King Charles would not hear. Peter's soldiers had learned much from the many drubbings we had given them, and the Muscovite General Scheremetoff had been a diligent pupil of all King Charles's methods could teach him.

Tsar Peter, knowing what advantage may lie in retreating as well as fighting, and knowing, too, how the fisherman draws the fish on by the bait, determined slowly and steadily to avoid conflict, and to make the winter, and starvation, and the difficulty of the country his partners. Thereto, he destroyed roads and bridges, and all food for man and beast, burning the country naked and bare wherever we must pass. As our peasants at home lead the bear onward to the trap by dropping here and there upon its track a tempting cut of bloody meat, so Peter would leave sufficient men in our way to fall a prey to our advance guards or offer us a minor conflict. The Baltic provinces he turned into a desert, so that our nearest lands could give us neither food nor help.

And these were King Charles's plans. — The main body of our troops should, proceeding over part of Smolensk where lay the great road, fared over by many a merchant, march upon Moskowa. There should the General Lewenhaupt join us, with his eleven thousand men and all supplies for man and beast of which we might be in need during the last stages of our great campaign. The General Lubecker, who now stood in Finland with fourteen thousand, was to destroy the newly risen city of St. Petersburg; thereupon should he also march southward and join His Majesty, while King Stanislaus with his sixteen thousand Poles and the General Crassow with his army of eight thousand more should march into the province of the Ukraine. In Southern Russia, the turbulent and ever mutinous Kossacks, Kalmucks and Zaporovians would without fail rebel and join us, while the Sultan, with legions numerous as the grasshoppers of Egypt, would stream north to take part in dealing the death-blow to their old and treacherous arch-enemy. In the midsummer of the coming year was the tempest to break over the head of Peter, now doomed to perdition. Even thus doth man propose, while the Lord God disposes.

Having reached the Polish border, we marched through Punitz, Ravitz, and Fraustadt to Slupza, until we came unto the banks of the river Weichsel, where we went into camp until came the New Year of Our Lord 1708. We were 43,650 men in all, of which more than half were horse. The army being quartered, we looked about for the mills, but the miserable Muscovites had burned them all. The King then ordered we should get hand-

mills from the peasants with which we might grind our corn. The Swedish horsemen and fellows made no ado about threshing, grinding and baking, but the German soldiers must set up a loud complaint.

Now came several important messengers to the Swedish camp, among others a Turkish Aga, who, being brought into the King's tent, began by arguing that a good wind maketh the way short. He brought assurances of his most gracious Lord's goodwill towards His Swedish Majesty and wondered greatly why the Swedish merchants did not trade with Constantinople. Inclining himself respectfully before King Charles, even so that his turban touched the ground of the tent, he told how in his holy city might we purchase red and colored silks, turbans, caviar and tigerskins, scarlet cloths with gold flowers, tobacco, coffee, indigo, rugs, calicoes, and cotton prints, silk moiré, pearls and corals, and all manner of camel's-hair.

We treated the strange fellow well, but marvelled much at many of his sayings.

It was also now that a messenger arrived from King Stanislaus, saying that Mazeppa, the Hetman of the Kossacks, had offered to enter into an agreement with the Kings of Sweden and Poland. This caused His Majesty great joy, for he had given the fellow much thought. Mazeppa was a great man and his name was known far outside the borders of the country which he ruled.

His career had verily been most adventurous and fate had treated him far better than he deserved. As a young lad he had come in an impoverished condition unto the

Polish camp, in order there to seek his fortune. Being of an adventurous and ambitious turn of mind, he soon learned both good and evil. As he was well-grown, pleasing in appearance, and of a lively disposition, he soon came into favor, not only with his masters and those that were placed above him, but also he gained the good graces of a beautiful and noble lady, who was the wife of one of the great officers of the realm. Stealing money for his evil purpose, he purchased from the Jews silk cloth and sable, and this he gave her as well as some Turkish dolls and what was left of the shining ducats which he had stolen. The relations of the two having transgressed the strict though oft irksome law laid down by the seventh of the Lord's Commandments, the lady's husband became aware of the amour which was going on, as it were, under his very eyes, and he had the young Mazeppa seized and undressed quite naked, while the lady was obliged to watch the entire course of proceedings. The lad's entire skin was then well smeared with honey and other sticky substance, and after the hens and geese in the stable had been killed and plucked, Mazeppa was rolled in the feathers. Thereupon there was led from the stable a fiery young stallion upon whose back Mazeppa was bound, amid the shrieks and lamentations of the lady, whose thoughts no longer dwelt upon love. Then lighting a bundle of faggots under the tail of the infuriated beast, the nobleman let them crackle for a time, whereupon the horse, plunging and all of a tremble for fright, was let loose. After it had run until its strength was exhausted, it was caught by some Kossacks, and the youth, who,

when sufficiently revived, told a full plausible story of the cruelty of his enemies, was clothed and given nourishment and his wounds were dressed with healing salve, after the remaining feathers had been plucked from him. And like Joseph in Pharaoh's land, Mazeppa grew up to become a great man among the Kossacks, until he filled the highest offices. He finally married a widow of untold wealth, which still more advanced him in honors. The Hetman or Commander of the Kossacks having fallen into disgrace with Tsar Peter, he made Mazeppa hetman. When the Tsar thereupon began war with the Turks, Mazeppa and all his Kossack horse stood him in good stead, and Mazeppa still growing in favor, Peter gave him several casks of gold and conferred upon him the Order of St. Andrew.

The Kossacks, over whom Mazeppa ruled, and their lands, were indeed in an unfortunate position. Their republic had, I am told, first arisen in the lower course of the river Dnieper. Having such uncomfortable neighbors to the north as the Poles, who were ever sucking out of them whatever they possessed of earthly goods, and again to the south the Tartars, who from their side plundered them upon all occasions, the Kossacks at last decided forever to abandon peace and the building of houses and cities, and to become, as the Greeks of old, a republic of warriors. Any stout fighter might join their wandering army as long as he was not a peasant, made confession to the Greek Orthodox faith and lived not with woman.

Thus lived this strange branch of the Little-Russian or Ukranian people. They feared neither God nor man;

and that they brooked not insult, even from the Sultan, that I can vouch for. When the great Sultan Mohammed IV wrote them a haughty letter in which he recounted his many titles, and would compel the Zaporovian Kossacks to humble submission, they gave his ambassador a reply which read in turn: —

Thou Turkish Satan, Thou damned brother of the Devil and Secretary of Lucifer himself. What manner of beast art thou? The Evil One vomits what thou swallowest. Thou art not worthy of having Christian sons beneath thee. We fear not thy army, and on land as well also as on sea, would we fight thee, thou Babylonian cook, Macedonian stave-binder, brewer of Jerusalem, Alexandrian goat-thief, swine-herd from Big and Little Egypt, Tartar ram, Karmeniac butcher-boy, evil-doer from Pedolia, seed of the very Devil, the clown of the upper as well as the lower world, swine-snout and horse's tail, red-haired bitch, unbaptised skull, may the Evil One catch thee! Thus the Kossacks answer thee, thou heathen; thou art unworthy of the mother of true Christians. The date we know not for we have not calendar. The moon is in the sky, the year in the book, and outside of this, it is the same day here as with thee.

THE HETMAN OF KOSJEVOJ, IVAN SIRKO,
with his whole Zaporovian army.

This was not the kind of letter that the Sultan was wont to receive, or of the epistolary style in custom at the Porte.

It was a strange people, capturing women being one of their chief occupations, for were they plump and light of hair, the Tartars and Turks would pay them plentifully for such. Despite the many nights and days we spent with them, yet knew we them not, for while on Monday they might be open-hearted, honorable, child-like and hospitable, on Tuesday might they prove wild

and faithless and sly or evil. Fat and fertile was their province of Ukraine, where some of them inhabited mountains and others the plains and yet others the islands of the Boristhenes. And great quantities of their corn they distilled into strong waters; their wethers and ewes and oxen were large and good to look upon.

Though they liked not the suzerainty of Muscovy, still must they bow beneath it, and Mazeppa set to rule them by Peter was perchance the only man fit for the office. Full of cunning and with no conscience nor honesty, faithless even unto his nearest friends, hypocritical and cruel, he was ready with the slyness of the fox for every situation. He was withal ridiculous in many actions, and amorous and cowardly in his every deed. For many years had he now by his crafty behavior deceived Tsar Peter who, turning a deaf ear to the tales told him of his faithful hetman, sent him living fishes from Neva and Ladoga, and would in return receive all manner of delicacies from the Ukraine, such as elk and roebuck steaks, pears and apples, and ripe cherries.

But to Mazeppa and his Kossacks, the yoke of the Muscovites had become irksome, as would that of the Angel Gabriel himself had he consented to look down on them from his place of honor in the Kingdom of Heaven. They liked not paying imposts to the city of Moskowa, nor being called upon to serve at such times as they would rather rob. Believing Tsar Peter's days were numbered, Mazeppa went to King Stanislaus with big words and fair promises; but Peter got word of this and

at last recognized the hetman's doublefaced hypocrisy and treachery.

The Tsar then called unto his court the captains of the Kossacks in order that they choose a new hetman. It took place in this manner. First was led forth, as if out of a chamber of arrest, the dummy or likeness of Mazeppa, which was all made of wood, the size of a man and completely dressed, with blue ribbon and insignia of knighthood. Prince Menzicoff and the great Chancellor Golofkin stepped forward, tearing to pieces a letter in which Mazeppa was named Knight of the Order of St. Andrew. Thereupon the star and ribbon were torn off the effigy and trodden under foot; and when the executioner had laid a stout cord about its neck, he dragged it forward to the square, where was a gallows. The hangman then broke the effigy's sword in two and hung the bits by the gallows, whereupon the effigy was hung and the office of Hetman of the Kossacks declared vacant.

This is all I now must tell of Mazeppa and his people, for it was not until the following year that we were to join forces and learn to know them all better. I must return unto his Majesty King Charles and the many events happening in our camp and on our march.

Among those that came to our camp was the Prince Jean-Albert Lubomirski, for he was set upon renouncing his own idolatrous religion and embracing the Lutheran faith. This was all the more praiseworthy as he had during a stay of twelve years in China baptised into the Church of Rome over 6000 of the strange people amid which he was laboring. Having now however read

the book of Chemnitus as to the Council of Trent, the scales fell from his eyes, and in open consistory by us did he abjure Catholicism and make confession as well as a most eloquent Latin discourse.

The country and the peasants amid which we were passing caused us much concern, killing our outposts and hindering our progress. So His Majesty gave orders that all houses were to be burned and all peasants that were caught were to be killed, hanged or burned, as we might see most fit. These severe methods did he find necessary in order that they might forever see the peril of thwarting so high, gracious and brave a king, and know that by so doing His Majesty would leave neither cock nor cur behind him.

Now in the city of Smorgania, where we halted, knowing the Hetman Mazeppa needed time to prepare his wild horsemen for their common action with us, the dancing bears have their high school and home, whence they start for to make their many waltz-steps in the towns and cities of the world, and to delight the idle populace and rustics. Numbers of these intelligent and learned beasts came a-dancing amid our horse and foot, astonishing greatly our horses, but to our own considerable happiness and diversion. In these parts we also met with great quantities of honey, of which we made a mead which was very delicious. Beeswax was thus also in great abundance. To conserve the trees in which these diligent and well-governed animals swarm, the wild forest peasants place around the foot of the trunks sharp stakes. This hinders the bears from climbing into them, for the points of the poles prick their

bellies and rumps beyond their endurance, and they abandon, much disconcerted, the pursuit of the sweet honey above, to which the humming of the bees had called them.

Having reached the river Boristhenes, King Charles now gave orders that the womenfolk which swarmed about the foot, even as the bees did around the tree-tops, should all be left behind and might not follow us across the river. Those who belonged in Sweden, should find their way home instanter. We thereupon destroyed the bridges after us amid much wailing. But as woman is both sly and perverse, some of their scouts hit upon a bridge we knew not of and had therefore not destroyed, and at nightfall a great quantity were once more among us.

Again in the months of June and July, in the year of Our Lord 1708, we set upon the pursuit of the Muscovite, who would grant us naught but small engagements until they had entrenched themselves by the river by Holowczyn, in what they had good reason to believe an impregnable position. Here Tsar Peter believed he could dig the deep grave of our Swedish army. Night having come and the Muscovites having the river directly in front of them and high embankments all around, they set off quantities of rockets and fireworks, it being their intent thereby to show us their contempt and scorn and drive us to fight. But the morrow's sun had not yet set!

Daylight having come, our horse held *chorum* [1] upon the field, just beyond the reach of the Muscovite's fire,

[1] *Chorum:* services with song.

but where they might all observe one regiment after the other drawn up upon the grass. It came to my mind how strangely like we were unto the brave boys in blue who had thus fought and prayed, so far from home and country, under the glorious banners of Gustavus Adolphus. Having prayed, we sang the verses of that hymn we loved so well and which beginneth: "A mighty fortress is our God."

That no one should fear the water, the depth of which we knew not, King Charles rode out in front of the whole army, and, drawing his great sword from its scabbard, he set spurs to his horse and dashed into the stream, followed by his drabants and the royal guardsmen. The water reached unto the arm-pits of the foot which followed, so they must hold their muskets above their heads. Having joined battle with the Muscovites, the slaughter being a joy to behold, the general Gyllenstierna, who was much beloved by His Majesty and was fighting near him, was grievously wounded, and his steed shot from under him. King Charles, seeing the sad plight of Gyllenstierna, jumped then off his horse and commanded the general to mount the royal charger. So did King Charles on foot turn to the infantry who were coming up, and such of them as were not floating upon the stream, getting into action, swung their caps above their heads and shouted for joy when they thus saw His Majesty was on foot going also to lead them into the thick of the fray. Tears of gratitude coursed down their faces as they pressed behind the King, who was running at their head as soon as they had formed, and as fast as his huge riding-boots would let him. Satan

incarnate could not have stopped the horse in front when they were aware of His Majesty coming up behind them and pressing hard upon their flanks. "The King! The King!" rang from one regiment to the other, lighting a fire in our hearts, which seemed as if it would consume us.

I will not go into the many difficult parts of the action; the masterly manner in which His Majesty turned our regiments, availed himself of every strategic advantage which had belonged unto the enemy and seized upon every opportunity. For as a skilful player of chess, who begins the game with but few men and an inferior position, did he soon so disconcert the opponent that he felt every move did but reverse the previous advantage. But as I now reflect upon the many campaigns and battles, it seems unto me as if this was His Majesty's most glorious victory, where the honor belongs to him alone, unaided by his generals, and to the wondrous understanding and knowledge of all that pertains to military matters and to conducting every detail amid the raging of a great battle. Here did he as a great general prove himself the master of his time.

The enemy being in breakneck retreat, and our horse following them as long as they durst, the foot were permitted to sit down and rest, laying their muskets in good order down beside them. The vivandières now arrived, to our unspeakable joy, for we were both thirsty and hungry and sweaty; and they brought from the headquarters, a half mile to our rear, aqua vitae and bread and mead, each soldier thus receiving a little refreshment. Not so the soldiers of the enemy, for

being safe beyond our reach, Tsar Peter, being greatly incensed at the loss of a battle, where all the advantage had been on his side, fetched out all those of his men that were wounded. They were thereupon made to draw lots, and those who drew a black lot were shot, whereupon the lucky fellows dug a long trench in which they buried them.

Come unto Mohilow, we rested there, with the King's eyes set upon Smolensk, instead of his turning to assist Mazeppa in the trouble which he was now busily fomenting in the Ukraine. His Majesty's army, though constantly dwindling and feeling the long strain, was still undefeated, and the King must hang upon the heels of the Muscovites until they led us unto the very borders of their own empire, God alone knows how far from the lovely shores of Sweden; but some of the foot believed they had fought their way well-nigh into another world. Little did we dream how far we were yet to go. Yet had it been revealed to us it would scarce have been in our minds to turn back so long as the King marched so steadfastly at our head with his face set ever forward like a questing hound upon the trail. Where he led us, there would we follow, were the very ground burning under our feet, and if the ground burned not, it were the only thing saved from the fire, for behind them the Muscovites left a trail of destruction wider than ten times the front of our army — so wide that we could not reach beyond it for provisions or any comfort. Like fogs from the Baltic in the spring, so was the air ever thick with smoke from the burning of villages, crops, and all else that might serve us for aid; and

to this day the smoke of a forest fire in the air, and sometimes even a whiff from my own fireside carries me back to that dreary march with a sinking of the heart.

And those who knew the land and were guiding us through it filled our hearts constantly with a greater dread by pointing out to us signs of the thing we dreaded most, the cold of the winter that was to come. This they declared would be more severe than anything we had yet encountered, for the wild geese and many other birds, most of which we knew not by name, had already begun their southward flight many days earlier than they were wont to go. One of our hunters, a native of the region, was constantly bringing in to us the skins of fur-bearing animals which he had killed; and as he dressed these by the firelight in our camp, he showed us the depth and fineness of the fur and declared its unusual quality to be a provision of these creatures for a severe winter. We paid no more heed to him at the time than to curse him for a croaking raven, and to make caps and gloves and linings for our boots of such skins as we could get from him, Now, whether he knew whereof he spoke or not, it befell that he was right, as I shall relate when the time cometh.

Having at last come so far north and east, King Charles saw it was not possible to reach Moskowa over Smolensk but he must take another direction. Several roads might be taken. Either was there Scylla, — or Smolensk and on to Moskowa, — or Charybdis, with the Ukraine and Poltava. The King, heeding no counsel and thinking naught of the pleadings of Piper and such others as might without presumption offer ad-

vice, decided full tardily to journey far south through Severia into the Ukraine, for common action with Mazeppa and his Kossacks.

We were in dire distress for food for both man and beast, and had been drawing in our belts always one hole tighter until they strapped but sorry bags of bones. Unto us was, however, coming as fast as well possible the General Lewenhaupt with a baggage filled with stores for all our wants. As he might reach us any day, and he was not sufficiently strong to fight alone the Muscovites who could not be far distant, we all besought the King to wait, be it but for three days. But he refused, and we must prepare to change our course. Scarce two journeys therefrom, there reached us the fearful news of how the Tsar had, by virtue of our not waiting, fallen at Lisna upon Lewenhaupt, who in a two days' battle had fought most valiantly, but finally had been obliged to burn all his baggage and supplies in order to save himself and the greater portion of his men, with which he now, hungry and exhausted, joined our own forces. That he had understood how to keep off the Muscovite, who had thrust himself between us after His Majesty had moved south, was indeed a miracle of bravery and generalship —with eleven thousand Swedes had he stood off forty thousand Muscovites, remaining on the field of battle after withstanding three charges! Evil messengers never ride singly; we now also received news of how the General Lubecker's expedition to St. Petersburg had met with failure. So these were frightful days, even for the bravest among us.

Now came Mazeppa and joined us with his soldiers.

They came without means of sustenance, so what we had possessed, not before enough for ourselves, we were now forced to share with them. The principal portion of the forces which he brought were Zaporovian Kossacks, who had rendered great services to Poland in its fights against the Turks. Those young men who join themselves unto the Zaporovians are permitted to nourish themselves by hunting and fishing as the season may offer. When winter approaches, those of them that would marry for this sleepy quiet season, when there is no chance for either hunting or fighting or anything better, must then depart from the land of the Zaporovians; for they spend the winter in celibacy amid constant debauch and quarrel among themselves. Poltava is their principal city; thither they take their merchandise, such as furs and fishes, and in their turn procure brandy, powder, lead, iron, and tobacco. They bury their noble dead near the altar of their churches; upon the coffin is laid the warrior's sword and upon his breast the *indulgentiæ*, that is forgiveness of sins, as well as also a letter from the Metropolitan in Kiev to the Holy St. Michael, requesting of him the service to admit the dead man into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Tsar Peter had spread among them many rumors of the evil intentions of our poor innocent soldiers and the cruelty of our humane and gentle King, and thereto offered to distribute among them sixty thousand gulden. But all this availed nothing, for Mazeppa himself told other tales, and getting numerous chieftains of tribes that dwelt on the islands or the Dnieper cataracts very drunk at a great feast, they all swore to Ma-

zeppa they would support the King of Sweden. This they told not to their soldiers, for later many of them deserted when they heard they were marching peaceably to the Swedish quarters and not unto the Muscovites. Nevertheless Mazeppa arrived with seven thousand men and a great suite of very noble and honorable retainers; and also a great number of their women, which not only seemed mighty unjust to our soldiers, who had been deprived of such goods, but was still further to prove of great embarrassment to our movements.

Coming unto the presence of His Majesty, Mazeppa harangued him in Latin, after which he kissed the King's hand. Being sore afflicted with the gout, he was permitted to sit down; but King Charles remained standing, his hat in his hand as was his wont. I was on duty in His Majesty's tent and could thus observe the old fox, or as he called himself, "the full feathered and experienced bird." He was some sixty-five years old, of middle stature, stern-looking, wearing his moustaches after the Polish manner, and in speaking he delighted much, despite the royal presence, in making what seemed to me to be merry jests with his own high officers. He had with him the insignia of his high office, the baton of the grand marshal, and a fine horse's tail upon a pole, as well as also a golden standard. He had also held around him other standards, partly furnished with crowns, partly with nankin on which was sewed the sign of the cross.

He thanked King Charles for having so graciously taken him under his protection, as well as God for hav-

ing delivered him and his Kossacks from the Muscovite slavery. Finally he kissed His Majesty's hand and ordered a horse brought to the opening of the royal tent. Taking a sharp sword in his hand and his Master of the Horse holding the tail out in the air, Mazeppa with one great stroke cut the tail off from the rump of the beast, and laid it at the King's feet, at which all the great Kossacks made a strange shriek, which I took to be a mark of homage and submission.

The audience being over, some of His Majesty's officers held a fine banquet for Mazeppa's suite. During the meal the Kossacks secreted in their clothing one piece after another of the royal silver service; and some having gotten larger platters and more precious objects than others, they fell to quarrelling among themselves. When now the servants called their attention to the fact that the service had for generations belonged in the royal Swedish pantry, they became as it were beside themselves with anger. Mazeppa, hearing of the trouble, then sent one of his officers to quell the disturbance, but he was forthwith done to death by the Kossacks for his trouble.

The cupbearers, conceiving, however, the thought that if but sufficient of the brandy were poured down the gullets of the quarrellers, and the stomach obtain dominion over the mind, they must perforce arrive at a stage where nature would become exhausted, plied them so diligently with the burning liquor that they all fell into stupors, with the exception of one or two who as it seemed sweated the brandy out even faster than it could be poured into them. By this means the silver

was most peaceably removed from their malodorous bodies.

They all remained amid us for several days; but when the time came to bid adieu to His Majesty, King Charles stated he would but give audience to such as had not drunken before the noonday meal of that day.

CHAPTER XV

POLTAVA

Now have I come to that frightful time which my poor quill knows not well how to describe; for surely soldiers never endured such hardships or suffered such tortures as did we in marching down through the endless wastes of Severia into the Ukraine, by the cities of Starodub, Baturin, Romny, Hadjatz, and Veprick, and past the innumerable hamlets and towns left smoking ruins before our approach. Was there ever such a winter as we knew during the end of the year 1708 and the beginning of 1709? Fighting was but child's play compared to what we endured. Would to God there had been more of cold steel and musket-balls. Never before has man known such a winter; and those of us whose homes lay near the ice and snow around the northern shores of the Baltic were no weaklings to complain. Even the mouth of the far-off Tajo, the canals of Venice, and the rushing currents of the Rhone stiffened in their course, and the children upon their banks fell upon their knees and prayed at the frozen miracles which they beheld. One could drive heavy loads across the Belts to Denmark, and in Paris the courts of justice did close. Around us, amid the howling icy blasts, the very game froze stiff in the field and the birds fell stark dead from the air, even as if they had been shot. Easy enough was it for the regiments who marched in the rear to find

their way; they needed no guides, for the road of march was strewn with horses that had burst, with the stiff frozen corpses of the men, and their arms and trappings. Our hearts ached and our eyes ran when we saw the hundreds of brave lads who cried for the field-surgeons to cut off their hands and feet, that had grown white and crackly, while the ears and tips of the noses would drop off without even the assistance of the knife.

Christmas Eve it was so cold the pastors could hold no sermon, but we must satisfy ourselves with singing *chorum*. When we once in a while would come upon some miserable huts that had not burned, though set fire to by the Muscovites, we would creep into them for shelter. But scarce had we made fire and laid ourselves to rest and prayed in the name of Jesus, before the smoke would be so great from the dampness within that we were obliged to drag out the men half-choked to death and throw them into the snowdrifts. On one march alone two thousand men fell dead before the eyes of His Majesty. Those who dropped and fell by the roadside were not the whole number of all we lost; for when, at the end of our day's march, we came to dismount from our horses, all of us stiffly and slowly but some not at all, we would find that a few of the horses were bearing stiff corpses, the knees frozen to the saddle and the fingers frozen to the reins so tightly that more than once we must needs cut them free. And those who could dismount, if we had a warm place such as a fire in a half-burned hut, would die when they came to the heat, belike from some artery or some organ that would burst within them in the process of thawing.

How it was that any of us came through such cold alive, I cannot imagine, but most of us did, though some of us showed the signs of it our lives long. I, who never lost so much as a hair from any wound in battle, lost two fingers from my left hand and the upper part of my left ear from riding half a day with that deadly wind against my side. If a man so much as spat, it fell in tinkling ice on the ground. Not even such spirits as were the King's could withstand the constant misery that was about us. I mind well one night, not a week, I think, before we came to Poltava, as we rode into a small town from which our foes must have departed in more haste than usual, for they had damaged it but little, — the name of it I cannot call to mind save that it was a heathenish word of the Tartars which I never knew how to speak, — as we came in here, as I have said, with our men dying by the roadside, the King rid through the ranks with his hat down over his eyes looking steadily at his horse's neck, for he could not look unmoved on the death of his brave men.

The good Saxon uniforms were, alas, all worn out, and we had instead only what we had found upon the corpses of the Muscovites or Kossacks. And if we went out hunting for them, it was not now for the pleasure of their killing, but even as we would hunt certain game, for the warmth of the coat we might thereby obtain. Could we hit upon a furry beast, we would be full glad to warm ourselves with the skin or to make shoebags thereof; for the boots of our troopers were all gone and the iron of the stirrups froze fast deep into the soles of our feet so that we could not shake them free or dismount.

We tried to hold the bellies of our horses together by tightening their girths, but this hindered them not from cracking. By loss of our cattle we must needs lose our cannon also, which were mired down and sunk in bogs and rivers beyond our power to draw them out. Our powder had, through the rain and snow, grown so wet that it had lost its strength; and when we fired a shot, it sounded as if we beat together a pair of gloves.

His Majesty wrote unto his sister, the Princess Ulrica Eleanora: "This winter has been very cold, so that many of the enemy, as also of our own people, have from time to time frozen to death or lost goodly portions of hands or feet or also the nose. But spite of all, this winter has nevertheless been a jolly season."

But great pity it was that Lagerkrona carried out with so little skill the expedition upon which he was sent, and that the Muscovites got into Starodub, with its rich stores, before us, and that the worthless fortress of Veprick cost us a good thousand men. Of the proud army of some 45,000 men with which we had marched out of Saxony, as well as the 6000 brought us by the General Lewenhaupt, there were now left but 20,000. They had been the finest, most hardened soldiers which our dear fatherland had e'er produced. Of those that remained to us, one third were ill or maimed, desperate and tired unto death. To this had the eighteen months of wandering through the wilds of Poland, Severia, and Ukrainia brought us.

At last, in the spring of 1709, we lay besieging the city of Poltava by the banks of the Dnieper's tributary,

the river Vorskla. Now King Charles decided that he must force upon the Muscovite a decisive action, for delay profited us naught. There was no hope of reinforcement or help; every day did we become hungrier, and our ammunition was both wet and lacking; indeed, it was a curious sight when the Swedish soldiers ran out upon the field and gathered up the cannon-balls as fast as the enemy shot them. The officers took their tinware and moulded it into musket-balls. There lay Tsar Peter, with 56,000 men, there being 48 battalions of infantry, 69 squadrons of cavalry, and many guns, in a well-defended camp, surrounded by trenches and walls, watching our starving ragamuffins, even as a pack of jackals the wounded lion, daring not approach him as long as the royal beast shows a spark of life.

It was now that the greatest of misfortunes befell us. His Majesty, who was out reconnoitring and superintending the trenches and bastions which we were building in front of the city of Poltava, was struck by a bullet, which entered his boot and his foot a little above the toe, going out at the heel. He deigned not to mention the occurrence nor to show the great bodily pain in which he was laboring, but remained upon his horse for six hours thereafter, continuing to give as cheerfully as before his orders and commands in all directions to the various soldiers who were digging and building. One noticed no change in the countenance of King Charles, but one of his officers, observing the blood dripping from his shoe, rode after the royal field-surgeon, who prevailed upon His Majesty to alight and enter a tent, where he now was borne, the pain being

too great for His Majesty to walk without reeling. The other surgeons arriving shortly, they all but one shook their heads, saying the royal foot must come off. But one surgeon informed the King he could help him by cutting deep. Whereupon the King replied: "Have done with the business instanter; cut away with good heart, my man, and fear nothing." His Majesty himself held his leg and looked upon the surgeon cutting as he would on the pruning of the trees in the royal fruit-garden in Stockholm. A day or so later the inflammation seeming to spread, we all despaired of his recovery but, God in Heaven be praised! the wound proved not fatal.

Throughout the months of May and June, the siege was carried on with such vigor that the inhabitants of Poltava and its strong garrison would have surrendered, had not the Muscovites strengthened their courage by shooting many a billet and letter in empty bombs over our heads and within the walls, telling them of our sorry and desperate plight. On every side did we seek a weakness in the walls, His Majesty, unable to walk, crawling upon his belly even within the outer walls in order to discover an opening, the soldiers within being the while unaware of his foolhardy manœuvre.

And as if our troubles were not well-nigh as manifold and grievous as those of Job, the Lord now sent among us an unbelievable lot of flies, which flew in swarms, filling the huts and woods with their dead bodies and even polluting our few stores. Praise be to God, however, that during these weeks the Kossacks must, for the love of their religion, fast, so that they brought us

the sheep and milk which they at other times kept for themselves.

We all felt as if some great disaster were about to happen; for a stomach does not get used to being constantly empty, but consumes the courage. Amongst the high officers there was cavil and dissension, and His Majesty was not there to give the word of command. This he had ever done, whatever might be the question, so they knew not well how to agree or proceed without it. His Majesty's mind was also much troubled, though he would not show it, yet let he both Gyllenkrook and the Colonel Hård sit by him during the long nights, when the burning in his foot would hinder his eyes from closing, and he would listen to their reading or enter into conversation with them, hearing how Tsar Peter had solemnly published the news that Catherine Alexiewna was his legitimate spouse, and other careless prattle.

Now the Muscovites were so nigh to us across the Vorskla that 'mid the stillness of the summer night we could hear the impudent roll of their drums.

As an evil messenger there arrived Klinckowström from Stockholm, bearing the sad tidings from the Queen Dowager unto His Majesty, of the death of his most beloved sister, the Countess of Holstein. But Count Piper, knowing well how King Charles loved her above all else in this world, forbade Klinckowström to deliver the letter whilst His Majesty remained ill of the wound, which commands were also followed.

At last, on the eighth day of July, this being as I have recounted, the year of Our Lord 1709, that great battle

was to be fought, which I verily believe will for centuries settle the destinies of eastern Europe, by which the Muscovite Empire stepped into European history, and my own beloved Sweden vanished from the front of its stage.

Not one of the half-starved soldiers flinched when the orders for the following day were given out. To bleed as well as to hunger had long been their wont, and well they knew that to die for their King was to live for their honor. Only one word of command had ever been given by our officers or understood by our soldiers, and that word was, "Forward." Never shall I forget that night, as I returned from the council of officers held in His Majesty's tent, and walked in and out amid the men sleeping in rows upon the ground. As I gazed upon their smiling countenances, lit by the glow of the campfires, my thoughts were wandering back for the last time to the loved ones on Sweden's soil, to the sweet scent of the pine forests, the cool breezes from off the bosom of limpid lakes, the whispering of the beeches and the warblings of the love-sick thrush in the long light summer night. This was not the cherished earth on which they dreamt to rest, nor was the morrow to bring them nearer to the fatherland.

Let him who would read of the battle of that day go to the historians who have writ thereof. For myself I can tell naught but what I saw and heard. All that befell I know not, nor lives there a man who does. If His Blessed Majesty himself had chosen to tell of it, then might we know all. But we have no word of it from him, either by tongue or pen. My thought of it to-day

THE BATTLE OF POLTAVA

From a Contemporary French Engraving

is in some matters as clear as if the scene were before me now, and in others as dark as if I had never seen it. Add to this confusion the fact that from that day to this I can never think of it but with a faster beating of the heart, nor speak of it with an even voice. What I know then, I may tell, but if it squares not with what is writ in history books let no man call me liar for that.

During the night did we find it wise to send some 2400 men from our little band to guard the baggage about a mile to our rear, 2000 more to observe the fortress of Poltava, and some 1200 were posted along the banks of the Vorskla to prevent the Muscovites from taking us in our flank. Thus nine of our regiments were out of the action, and but 13,000 men went into the fight. With all that remained of the gallant little band we marched out into the plain, as the sun rose upon the heavens. Many a heart was raised to high heaven as we all knelt down for the last time together, and prayed to the God of our Fathers underneath the blue and yellow silken banners, which we loved, aye, all but dearer than our souls. In our midst lay our beloved King, in his camp-bed so placed upon a white wooden stretcher, like unto a bier such as one uses in a church, that horses fore and behind might carry it into the thick of the fight. Seventy-two cannon were showing their dark muzzles from behind the Muscovites' seven redoubts, while our horse and foot were not to be supported by a single piece, for the artillery was, for lack of ammunition, away with the baggage.

The regiments having now all advanced bravely out upon the field in columns, the Field-Marshal Rehnsköld

being in supreme command, we were ordered to stand still and form ourselves as determined upon the night before. Upon our right wing was the horse under the General Schleppenbach; upon the left the horse under the General Creutz: while in the centre did we mass our infantry under the General Lewenhaupt; His Majesty himself and the field-marshal having placed themselves to the left. The General Roos with his horse to our right had further been given the honor of attacking the four Muscovite redoubts here situated, while the General Sparre attacked the three to our left. His Majesty turned unto Lewenhaupt, as he was carried past the central columns, and graciously inquired of the general how he liked the hour, whereupon the old general made reply, "I hope with God's help, Your Majesty, it will go well"; upon which King Charles answered, "In God's name, then, let us march to the attack."

Then forward, even as surges a mighty river, upon the breaking of its dam in springtime, rushed our horse upon the seven redoubts. Clouds of smoke rolled like huge crested waves from off their sides as the guns belched forth. Forward, forward, stormed the lines. 'Twas indeed a gallant sight for gods or men. In a short space of time the redoubts were ours, and choked to their very brims with Muscovite gunners and Swedish horse. But upon the corpses stood the boys in blue. Neither cannon nor powder nor balls had they had to help them, merely their courage and their shining swords.

Now were we, alas! to tell how our great King was needed to guide us in the hour of strife, for neither the field-marshal nor the General Lewenhaupt was aware

of the peril which ensued when Creutz and Sparre, hotly pursuing the fleeing Muscovites, left their conquered redoubts, and in place of awaiting their comrades upon the left wing and turning to good and great advantage the Muscovite cannon upon the flanks of their owners, stormed ahead, leaving Roos alone and unprotected. Alas and alack! For Tsar Peter, seeing the great blunder, sent his General Menzicoff against the Roos, and smothered and captured this Swedish division with his innumerable hordes. The General Lewenhaupt, who had advanced full well with his men and was indeed preparing to storm the southern side of the enemy's camp, did also, as he was about to snatch victory from the defeat of his comrade, receive orders to halt, which he understood not, but they made him right hot. Being unable to observe or judge of the entire disposition of the field, like a good soldier, he must obey the orders.

The Count Piper, having sat himself upon a drum beside His Majesty's litter, would divert his master's mind, but being heavy of heart, he could but say, looking up with tears streaming down from his eyes, "May the angels of God protect Your Majesty!" And these were the last words that passed between so true and tried a servant as the first minister, and the King of Sweden.

Well do I know how His Majesty had, in agony of soul, watched the disastrous progress of events, and how his commanders were lacking both in judgment as well as coolness of command, for I had several times been sent scurrying with orders from him to officers along the lines. First was his litter surrounded by twelve of the

drabants and twenty-four guards, for he would not take more out of the fight. A band of Kossacks, beholding the little band, rode shrieking as was their wont, down upon the royal standard. Now rose the soul of his ancestors in the heart of Charles the Twelfth. Sitting up upon his litter, with his naked sword in hand, he commanded his guard to carry him into the battle, there where they saw the fight was thickest. Forward! For the honor and glory of Sweden! 'Twas a strange sight that greeted the eyes of the foot as the little band swept past them — wildly leaped their hearts at the glory and joy of it. Sweden's King would die with his men! And they closed behind him like a wall of iron.

The horses which bore the litter were soon shot to pieces, and the new ones go down as soon as they are harnessed. Twenty-four guardsmen now carried it forward. Ere we had crossed through the first smoke, there were but seven of the brave fellows left, and then at last a cannon-ball shattered the framework of the litter. Despite the great agony of his wound, as to which the smile could not deceive us, for it was writ plain upon his features, the King was lifted up upon a horse, his foot with the bloody bandages trailing down its side, being set upon the horse's mane. Right soon did this horse also go down, so that we must lift His Majesty upon another. Down went the brave fellows of Uplands, of Kalmar, Jönköpings, Skaraborg's and Nyland's regiments. Scarce could we see the ground, so thick lay the bodies. Even thicker, God be praised, were strewn the green uniforms of the Muscovites. Both the Tsar Peter and his Imperial spouse, Catherine Alexiewna,

were fighting 'mid their soldiers, Peter crying lustily at each advance which his guardsmen made over our dead bodies, "Where is my brother Charles?" Through the din of battle could we hear plainly the continuous ringing of all the church-bells of Poltava. It was indeed a chorus of hell they rang out. The dear tattered banners shot asunder by many a glorious fight swayed and drooped above the raging sea of conflict.

The Field-Marshal Rehnsköld seeing now that our poor men were overwhelmed and well-nigh crushed by the superior numbers of the Muscovites, collected all our forces as best he might, in order to protect and bring into safety His Majesty's person. Unable to use our arms, leaderless but not vanquished, the remnants of the most glorious army ever brought together now rallied round our adored King to seek to bring him out of peril. The field-marshal, having reached His Majesty, informed him that the foot had been dispersed. Scarce had he cried unto the cavalry past which he was galloping, "Boys, see that you save the King," ere both he and Count Piper were taken prisoners. "Stand, boys, stand!" shouted one company to the other as they all went down to death together.

The Muscovites' closed battalions were now scarce fifty paces away; we thus took by force His Majesty to where our baggage was left. We disobeyed his commands for the first time in our lives, and acting contrary to his orders, placed him in the travelling carriage of the German Major-General Majerfeldt, which was lined within with blue silk and which His Majesty was now destined to use for some time to come, through-

out those strange adventures which were about to befall him. Troops of horse, tightly closed and scornful of death, assisted greatly our retreat by making constant assaults upon the enemy, thus hindering their pursuit and enabling us to gather our forces farther to the south.

On the field of battle lay the flower of Sweden, and therewith Hermelin, Torstenson, worthy grandson of his great sire, and many another hero. Three thousand more had been brought into the Muscovite camp. Among these were, besides the field-marshal and Count Piper, also the little Prince, the generals Schleppenbach, Roos, Stakelberg, and Hamilton, as well as His Majesty's household, including his cook, his chamberlain, his doctor, surgeon-in-chief, pastor-confessor, apothecary, treasurer, quartermaster, letter-writer, trumpeters, lacqueys, coachmen, and other domestics.

Such was, however, the respect of the Muscovites for the Swedish arms, that despite our great losses, they left us to withdraw in peace southward, whither we journeyed without tarrying, following the course of the Vorskla until on the eleventh we reached unto Perevolotjna on the banks of the Dnieper. Here all the food and money which remained in our stores and military chest, were distributed among the officers and men. They all received biscuits and the officers ducats with which to assist their poor men. And the baggage was all burned. Tsar Peter in the mean while, the eve after the battle, had a great banquet for the high Swedish officers, where, before he graciously absented himself, he drank the health and long life of King Charles,

as well as also, turning to Rehnsköld, "to his masters in the art of war," and gave the Prince of Würtemberg his freedom, and whatever he lacked in equipment and service.

And now had the hour struck when this great tragedy was to end and Sweden to face the darkest day in her history. On the heights all around us, there gathered constantly thick masses of Kossacks and Muscovite cavalry, which had at last caught the scent and tracked the lion to his lair. Before us rolled the black waters of the Dnieper. On this very spot had Mazeppa crossed fourteen years earlier in order to join Tsar Peter in his expedition against Azof and the Turks. Some days before the battle of Poltava, the Tsar had burned all around us and done away with all boats or craft that might have ferried us across to safety on the opposite shore. Many of the Kossacks made shift to get themselves across: having stripped themselves naked, they slipped from off their horses' backs, guiding the beasts in swimming by their heads when they would turn back. The sly hetman lay trembling with fear and wracked by his rheumatism, in his carriage, beseeching all who came his way to help him and his treasures across. A young wife he had but recently taken seemed to make much of him, but there was no one who now could give thought to his sacks of silver or the two kegs of gold which he slept upon in his carriage.

And all those that were high in command went now to the King and besought him to leave, if he wished to save Sweden from utter ruin. They urged upon him that as long as he was free, there was still hope for his king-

dom. Whither should he then turn, he asked Gyllenkrook; to which this brave officer replied that three courses lay open; to fight again, which was quite hopeless; to flee through the desert to Tartary; or to go back to Ukraine. The second of these alone seemed possible. Unknown to His Majesty, we now prepared the travelling carriage in which he had been journeying.

Poor Lewenhaupt came into the royal tent. "Most Gracious Lord," said he, "God follow Your Majesty on all your ways. One grace I have yet most humbly to crave, if Your Majesty will but grant it me." King Charles replied: "What then may it be?" "Your Majesty knows that I have ever been a faithful servant; that I have done Your Majesty many a good and faithful service and have never feared exposing my person therein. I am but a poor fellow and have a poor wife and children. If I deserve aught for my faithful services, most Gracious Lord, then I pray that my poor wife and children may not wander around after my death with beggars' staves." "It shall be as you request," said His Majesty, whereupon the King as his last mark of favor gave his hand to Lewenhaupt to kiss.

Thereupon came unto His Majesty the Creutz, and the Lejonhufvud, and the Sparre, and they all reasoned long with him, beseeching him in his despair to think of Sweden rather than himself. In great agony of mind was he finally carried into his carriage, and with Mazeppa and a number of high officers set upon boats we had builded together. Some 500 men had already gotten across, as also the Funck with a detachment of nigh 800 and also the drabants. The silence of the night was

alone broken by the dip of the oars and the feverish work of all around, working with fear of death in their hearts to make rafts for their own crossing.

Thus the Lion of the North parted forever from the army with which he had fought and conquered upon the shores of Denmark, at Narva, by the Düna, at Kliszow, Pultusk, Fraustadt, and Holowczyn.

Now came the day of reckoning. The Muscovite advance guards are already within musket-shot of our outposts. Our soldiers lying all around in the grass behind their horses, with their small prayer-books in their hands, are praying the Lord Jesus Christ to care for their souls. The high officers ride from one squadron to another and ask the soldiers, would they fight once more? They return: "His Majesty is gone from us and it can but turn to our butchery and destruction." The General Lewenhaupt with Generals Creutz and Cruus, in whose hands His Majesty had left the command, were then fain to yield at discretion and come to an accord with Tsar Peter by virtue of which our entire army capitulates, being some 10,000 horse and 5000 foot and nigh 1000 officers, which be it said were the entire flower of Sweden's nobility and gentry. Our men must lay down their arms in the hands of the enemy, with what heavy hearts may be imagined. Many of them had their clothes taken from off them, and were bound with ropes, as one would bind animals that have no souls. The Muscovites then drove them before them as they would dumb creatures, not stopping until they once more reached the plains of Poltava, where their comrades lay still unburied though stripped naked by the soldiery and the in-

habitants of the city. Now were they to be scattered over the great Muscovite Empire, as the summer wind drives the feathery crown of the dandelion over the fields of Sweden. The greater portion were to die in slavery, or in prisons, or upon the far-off shores of Siberia. Few indeed were ever again to see the fatherland. Some were sent to Smolensk, some to Kiev, and others to more distant places, but the greater portion were driven to the residence city Moskowa, suffering the frightful tortures of heat upon the long road. When the Swedes were greatly thirsting, for they found no water upon the road, then shot the Muscovites *victoria* and salvos of joy over our misery with three rounds of a hundred muskets.

In the month of December, the greater number of our prisoners reached Moskowa, where a great triumphal procession was now to be held by Tsar Peter. The bells of the seventeen hundred churches and cloisters made a great noise as they were rung for joy continually throughout the day and night, this making Peter and Catherine right glad and merry. One could not even hear the voices of those roving through the streets. These were hung with all manner of pictures, pine-boughs, tapestries and costly rugs. There were also great portals of honor, with different paintings doing great honor to the Tsar and showing contempt for King Charles. Thus we had to look upon a double-headed eagle which picked a lion to death, as well as many a presentment of the Swedish lion led about in chains by a Muscovite.

Before break of day were they led out to the plain by the great Kremlin church and given the place of ignominy in the procession, in which they were forced to

march without sustenance until night had set in, while all around they saw booths set out with brandy and honey-cakes with which the populace drank and ate themselves full and contented.

First of all must the common soldiers march; after them the ensigns, the corporals and non-commissioned officers, and all the officers except the most exalted marching according to rank. Thereupon came our standards and banners dragged in the mud from under the left arm of the lowest Muscovite soldiers, and our drums and trumpets piled high upon the sleighs. Then followed His Majesty's fourteen fine hand-horses, his bed, and the miserable litter upon which he had been carried during the fight at Poltava, which the Muscovites had gathered up and mended. The German generals who witnessed the spectacle blamed the Tsar much for exhibiting this litter, for they reasoned wisely that it was a glorious monument to King Charles. Last of all in their unhappy company, came on foot the Count Piper and all our great generals, headed by the field-marshal. Thus were they marched as a spectacle for the ridicule and scorn of all the Muscovites that had assembled to make sport of us.

Likewise did the Russian ministers in Copenhagen and Berlin and The Hague celebrate with much joy and drink, and epigrams insulting to our gracious King. But in Vienna such affront was forbidden, while in France King Louis forbade all the libraries and printers of his kingdom to publish the tidings of the battle of Poltava which were insulting to the person and honor of His Majesty of Sweden. My Lord Duke of Marlborough

wrote a billet to my Lord Godolpin couched in these words: —

I cannot avoid telling you that the particular account Prince Menzicoff gives is so terrible, that having once seen the King of Sweden, I am extremely touched with the misfortune of this young King. His continued successes and the contempt he has of his enemies have been his ruin.

But I cannot follow the thousands of poor fellows unto their miserable ends nor can I describe all the many and curious manners in which they earned their living by polishing of stones or graving of seals, by making gloves or saddlery, or by the carpenter's bench or in the smithy. I must return to our poor King who orders me with him across the Dnieper.

Not knowing as yet that his dearest sister lay dead he wrote to her as follows: —

Here everything goes well. Only of late and because of singular misfortune has there happened the disaster that the army has had a reverse, which I hope may shortly be repaired.

I also received a "faveur" in my foot some days before the battle, which hinders me for a time in riding. But now I hope presently to have done with that injury.

'Twas indeed a strange account of what His Majesty and his arms had passed through.

Unto King Stanislaus he wrote: —

SIRE: —

Ayant appris que la nouvelle de la bataille auprès de Poltava et l'incertitude de ma destinée a causé beaucoup de peine à Votre Majesté, je n'ai pas voulu manquer à *Lui* faire savoir que cette perte n'est pas d'une telle conséquence qu'elle ne puisse être réparée, et que ma blessure pourra être guérie dans quinze jours. C'est pourquoi je prie votre Majesté de ne rien relâcher de son grand courage, et d'être

assurée que je trouverais moyen de me rendre bientôt auprès d'elle avec un secours considérable.

En attendant je la recommande à la divine protection et je demeure.

De Votre Majesté,
Le bon frère, ami, et cousin,
CAROLUS.

Once across the Dnieper, our little procession was swiftly formed, and His Majesty, being placed in a chaise, sets out with all possible speed, travelling both night and day to cross the terrible desert of Bessarabia and reach before the Muscovites the Turkish territory upon the other side of the river Bug.

We knew well that Lewenhaupt and our trusty generals would spin out, according to their best invention, the terms of capitulation, in order thereby to delay our pursuit as long as lay in their power. We also knew that the lack of boats which the Muscovites had destroyed in order to delay us would now prevent their own crossing. But not an hour was to be lost. We made a strange and motley column as far-spent, with bleeding hearts and limbs, we struggled in frenzied haste across those burning sands. The Kossacks and Tartars were our guides, and they seemed to know their way as the sea-captain does amid the endless waves of the great oceans, yet had they no compass. They had with them naught but their swords, and women-folk who followed on foot crying and shrieking, and the latter had silver rings through their dirty nostrils, while their fingers and nails were painted with all the hues of the rainbow.

Great were our sufferings. We came amidst grasshoppers or a species of locusts, that rose before noon

from the seashore in such swarms that they lay a hand-breadth above the ground, and when our horses trod upon them, they cracked and banged like the fire-crackers made by the Chinese for diversion at their fêtes. When the sun in the morning had dried their wings enough, they flew almost to the same height as the swallows, and did form such dense clouds in the air that it grew as dark as under a thunder cloud. When rising, they made a noise like a tempest. To add to our pains, we lacked both drink and victuals, as the Kossacks and Tartars themselves lacked sustenance and the nights were as cold as the days were burning hot. Now the Tartars, who to our abhorrence seemed not unused to horse-flesh, cut the throats of their weaker beasts, then seated themselves upon the backs of the stronger behind their companions. They dressed the horse-flesh in their own peculiar manner, selecting what they deemed the best bits, which they dried in the sun or else laid under the saddle, where by the much riding the meat became tender and easy of digestion.

We came upon valleys with cherry trees full of sharp red berries which seemed to cause but slight disorder in our stomachs, and some wild sheep and hares and what looked to us like partridges, which we caught in our hands 'mid the long grass. The Kossacks assuring us that the sheep, which were lean and high and bow-necked, with wool black of color, were good to the taste, we pondered much how to dress them, for there was then not a stick in sight. Necessity being ever the mother of invention, an ingenious fellow gathered the dung from his horse, which had dried under the scorching rays of

the sun, lighted it, and though the heat was scarce sufficient to make the flesh tender, yet when we found it tasted more like roebuck than sheep, our mouths watered as we tore it apart.

We had come quite near to the country of the Turks, when His Majesty sends the General Poniatowski [1] and Klinckowström ahead in order that they might interview the Governor of Otjakov and inform him of our approach. Great was the consternation of these faithful officers when this high Turkish official, living so near the place where we must cross the river, made reply that he durst not admit us into his country before he had sent for orders from his Sublime Lord in Constantinople. Here was a new and sad dilemma for us to face when we had at last, spent and famished, reached the river Bug ahead of the Muscovites. The Governor finally, however, on receiving a communication from the Sultan sent his officials across the river to our camp with the information that His Majesty and his immediate servants might cross, but no others, upon pain of having their heads struck off.

The Turkish tradesmen, seeing our famished appearance and lean bodies, came to us in their barks laden with sheep and fowls and figs, as also wine and spices. Some among them laid gifts at the feet of His Majesty. For such supplies would they not only expect liberal gifts in return, but all the ducats they believed our purses contained. Being thus between the devil and the

[1] General Poniatowski was a colonel of King Stanislaus's Swedish guards, a nobleman of rare merit, whose attachment to King Charles had caused him to offer his services to the Swedish King, and later, to follow him, without a command, into the Ukraine.

deep blue sea, we took with force such of their boats as had crossed to us, ferrying our men over as fast as possible, the Kossacks and Tartars swimming beside us, hanging on to the tails of the horses left them. The Muscovite horsemen appearing upon the horizon when some 900 were safely across, His Majesty and the chief officers got into the great boat sent for them and were thus the last to reach the land of the Turks. Those perforce left behind met a sorrowful fate, 300 being chased into the river and others dragged back to Muscovy.

Our journey to the town of Bender lay along the banks of the river Dniester. The small Turkish wagons we purchased served us for shelter during the heat of the day and for beds during such nightly hours as we could take for sleep. They became our homes, even as did the tub for the Grecian man of learning, and we heeded not the melancholy and ridiculous spectacle we presented when we crawled out from under them to make our ablutions in the early morning hour when first the trumpets sounded.

Achmed III was now ruler over the Turkish Empire. He had been placed upon the throne in 1703, in place of his brother Mustapha.

His Majesty feeling it was now but fitting to send a high emissary unto him, selected Mr. Neugeweber and wrote by him as follows: —

This letter, signed by our Royal Hand, is to give Your Highness notice of our arrival in your dominions, and to inform you of the misfortune that has befallen us in those of the Tsar, after we had thus far, as fortunately as justly, chastised the violation of the law of nations and the faith of treaties

solemnly sworn to. After having forced King Augustus to renounce the Crown of Poland of which he was more the tyrant than the King, we gave that nation a king from amongst themselves who is a friend to your Sublime Porte, after we had chased the Tsar, his ally and colleague in perfidy, from Poland, which he had set in a flame, and pursued him as far as the town of Poltava, to give him laws and break his pernicious designs; Heaven has permitted our army, diminished and fatigued by rough marches, and wanting the most necessary things for subsistence, when suddenly overwhelmed by a multitude three times more numerous and provided with all we lacked, in the end to lose the battle.

Not being in a condition, nor near enough our provinces, to raise an army, and desirous to escape falling into the hands of the enemy, we are come to seek in this Empire under the august protection of Your Imperial Highness an asylum against his perfidy, and means of immediately joining the army we have left in Poland under the command of the worthy King whom we have given to that kingdom, to support him on his throne, in case that he whom we have by force dethroned should attempt to re-ascend it, contrary to the faith of the treaties which we have made with him.

What we seek for ourself, besides this asylum and these means, is the friendship of Your Imperial Highness, to whom we offer and promise on our part the most sincere attachment we are capable of. The first proof we think ourselves bound to give of this attachment to Your Highness is to inform you that if we allow the Tsar, whose ambition is no more guided by courage than by faith and honor, time to make use of the advantage our ill-fortune has given him over us, he will fall suddenly on some of your provinces, as he and his allies in perfidy have done upon some of ours, beginning an unjust war, not only without any declaration, but even in the midst of a peace established in the most solemn manner, at the time when he assured us by reciprocal ministers, that he was sincerely resolved religiously to observe the treaties, and desired us to do the same on our part. But the several forts which this Prince has built upon the Tanais, and upon the Palus Mæotis, and his new fleet, sufficiently proclaim his pernicious designs

against your Empire without considering these examples of his perfidy. Things being in this posture, we see nothing more useful or proper to avert the danger with which this Prince threatens your august Empire, than an alliance between your Sublime Porte and our court, by virtue of which Your Highness will put us in a condition to return safely into Poland and our provinces, under the guard of a body of your valiant horse, to strengthen our army which is commanded by a wise and faithful king, who will voluntarily form an alliance. Which being settled, we shall once more carry our just arms as far as the heart of Muscovy, to suppress the unjust ambitions of the Tsar. Finally, we will never forget the favors it shall please Your Highness to confer upon us, and will seek all opportunities and means to give real proof of our gratitude; and we shall always think it a particular honor and a real pleasure to subscribe ourself,

Your faithful Friend,
CHARLES, SON OF CHARLES XI.

His Majesty having dispatched this missive, and his wound being greatly healed, we believed we must now give him the sad news of his beloved sister's death. None daring however to break the news unto him directly, we spoke among ourselves, in a manner that he might hear us, of the Princess Hedvig Sophia of Holstein "of blessed memory." The King quickly seizing our design, there was nothing more to hide, whereupon we gave him the letters we had ventured to conceal. How the news went the noble-minded Lord to heart is well-nigh indescribable and incredible. We had come to believe that he had grown so feelingless through the life in camp that no one's death would any longer cause him concern, and furthermore, that the good training received in youth had made him absolute master of himself. We now discovered our mistake. Those who were nearest

His Majesty were most surprised, for they had never seen him show anger, desire, joy, nor sorrow, nor the slightest change in humor or temper over his wound or even the disaster of Poltava. This loss, however, found the one weak spot in his armor, as did the arrow the heel of Achilles. He crept into his miserable wagon and wept, and for many days did he not speak except to give the necessary words of command, and those of us near his person dared never again mention the royal Princess he had loved so greatly.

He summons however the best courier in our company, and gives him this pathetic and eloquent letter, which he commanded him to ride with to his sister Ulrica Eleanora in his own Swedish Kingdom, journeying as fast as his lungs and his stallion's feet would carry him. In it the noble, breaking heart poured out its great grief: —

SERENEST PRINCESS:

MOST GRACIOUS, BELOVED SISTER!

I beg my heart's most dearest sister not to conceive it ungracious of me that I again have for so long a while been unable to wait upon her with my poor writing. The opportunities by which I may send letters from here have not been secure, nor could we feel sure whether they would ever reach you.

Thereunto must I confess, since I have now lost that hope with which I had consoled myself, namely, of never being so unfortunate as to survive what now I must, since then I have been so troubled that I could neither write nor mention the sorrow which I can never overcome until these now parted may once more be united.

But I do wish that our Lord may sustain, comfort, and guard the sister of my heart, on whom now rests all my hope, and that He may never let me bear the sorrow of hearing

aught but of the unchanged well-being of my heart's dearest. I remain unto my death,

My very dearest sister's
Humblest and most faithful brother and servant,
CHARLES.

The Governor of Bender, who styled himself the Seraskier, had, we conceived, received secret, gracious orders from his sublime master, for upon our approach to his city, our reception was most noteworthy. When we, now some 1500 Swedes and 3000 Kossacks, came near to this lovely city, the Governor rode out to meet us with great honor, surrounded by a large suite, on foot as well as on horseback, and by the shooting of many cannons. He had a long white beard, wore garments of green silk, as also a great turban upon his head, and his white Arab horse was accoutred equally well. The body-guards who walked on foot in front of the Seraskier were dressed in white cotton long coats, with wide scarlet breeches which hung down over their feet and which, when we later begged that we might examine them more closely, we found to be fastened under the feet with socks of yellow leather of Morocco and slippers. Round their waists they wore silver girdles, three fingers broad, wherein were stuck fine knives. Also had they gilded shoulder-straps and silver-mounted sabres, wherein were set precious stones. They wore turban hats, some green and some red, wound around the ends with mull and golden threads. They seemed fresh young bucks, tall, swinging fellows, and had long and polite mustachioes above their mouths.

When the Governor had come quite near, he alighted

from his horse and went forthwith to His Gracious Majesty's wagon, carrying out of respect both his hands crossed over his breast. Then he bowed most humbly to the earth before His Majesty of Sweden. After kissing the covering that lay over the King in the wagon, and then His Majesty's hands, he begs him on his own Lord's behalf to be very welcome in his beautiful city.

Thereupon were we escorted to a fine oak forest but a quarter of a mile outside the city, where many green tents were set up in a square, in the centre of which stood one great and beautiful double tent with six large gilded balls upon its top, lined throughout inside with carmine-colored cloth. This is presented to His Majesty by the Sultan. His Majesty has no sooner entered this tent, than the Seraskier's guards arrive, bringing sugar confectionery as well as melons and other delicious things. Two companies of janissaries stationed in front of His Majesty's tent give salvos with their muskets, upon which signal all the pieces on the walls around the city are fired off in the King's honor.

While we were greatly wondering at the marvels which thus all of a sudden betided us, there came a messenger from the Tartar Khan bringing another most rare and costly tent which was embroidered inside with gold and silver and divers colors of silk, as well as also figures of strange people and birds and animals, which was valued at six thousand dollars. Many musicians follow with all manner of instruments, whereupon they were to play every morning and evening for the pleasure of His Majesty. Then says the Seraskier to the King: "I have been commanded to behave to Your Majesty in

all things as I would to my Master, the Emperor, were he present. Sire, be the least offense shown you during the time you are in my care, my head answers for it."

Thus honorably installed, we made crutches for His Majesty, and a leathern pocket stuffed with cotton in which he might place the wounded foot when riding.

His Majesty gave his first attention to restoring the Divine services it had been our wont to hold. The morning as well as the evening hours were appointed for the reading of the Holy Scriptures and Psalms, to which we were called by the music of the trumpeters and drummers. On Fridays would we have a sermon, and Sundays, two. His Majesty regulated also his household and chancery and guard; there were to be two tables, one for the King and one for those of his officers and noblemen and high churchmen who were fed at the royal table. Fortune would have it that a great portion of the royal silver service had been brought safe from Poltava's field. Wondrous to us was the hospitality of which we were to see so many proofs. For our sustenance the Sultan ordered daily presented to His Majesty five hundred reichsthaler, as well as also much fodder and great quantities of supplies.

Also did His Majesty order his musicians to play for our diversion daily in the morning and evening. Some thirty musicians performed on all manner of instruments, — on violins, hautboys, trumpets, and kettledrums, making a lively and pleasant noise as they sounded, — whereunto the Mussulmans would quickly answer by their musicians rushing out by our camp and making a high and strong harmony.

CHAPTER XVI

BENDER

Now must I, for a short space, turn to the events which were taking place and affecting Sweden, while we, far away from her shores, were unable to give any succor. Only the General Meyerfeldt had journeyed home to inform them of our condition. This time Neugeweber brought from the Grand Vizier in Constantinople a poignard studded with diamonds, which he gave to King Charles upon the day Mazeppa was laid out a corpse amid his howling wives.

In Sweden there was frightful misery and starvation, for the harvest had failed, and the Danes had once more perfidiously declared war and blocked the North Sea to our vessels. Our people had no means of sustenance, and must, in order to keep body and soul together, eat the very bark off the trees, which they dried and ground into meal, as well as also the tender buds of the trees, whereby there arose dangerous disorders of the stomach, typhoid and dysentery. The beggars wandered in immense hordes about the countrysides, like unto armies in time of war. In his castle at Potsdam, the King of Prussia, who now cast covetous eyes upon Swedish Pomerania, received not only Augustus and Peter, but also the King of Denmark, all now plotting our ruin. In Poland a new revolution had broken out; Augustus, having foully perjured himself, the Pope assisting him

in this act of perfidy by absolving him from his oath, was returned in order once more to claim the throne. Such of our Baltic provinces as remained unto us were, alas, too soon to feel the effect of Poltava, for Viborg, Dünamünde, Pernau, and Reval fell all into the hands of the Tsar and with them our entire provinces of Carelia, Livonia, and Esthonia. Not a single town or an inch of land could we longer claim on the eastern shores of the Baltic, and our enemies were already devising means whereby they might wrest from us our rich provinces on its southern borders.

The Regency in Stockholm was, in faith, no better off than we poor wretches so far from the turmoil. France had been humbled, my Lord Duke of Marlborough having just won the bloody field of Malplaquet. The Holy Roman Emperor, the German princes, as also Queen Anne and the States-General of the United Provinces, concluded a strange treaty at The Hague.

All this we learned from such couriers as were not taken prisoners by Pole or Saxon or Muscovite upon their long road. His Majesty now appointed the experienced, honest, learned and zealous von Müllern to attend to such matters as concerned us without, while the erstwhile hatter's apprentice, Karsten Feif, directed our personal affairs. Attached to His Majesty were now also five generals, thirty-eight staff officers and also fifty-five others, and twenty-four drabants. There were also twenty preachers and twenty-eight gentlemen of the Chancery, besides the servants and soldiers. To these were added the Polish and Zaporovian allies, our camp constantly growing by many who had been res-

cued, or ransomed from imprisonment, or reached us in divers manners, until we numbered several thousand. A goodly number of guests, indeed.

His Majesty being quite recovered of his hurt rode once more, so that two or three horses stood each evening, all spent and sweaty, in his stable. And as matters of state did not fill his day, he would constantly drill us, to the wonder of the Turks who streamed out of their city to watch our evolutions; or he would work out many a campaign and method of attack; or listen unto the young, amiable Baron Fabrice, of so gay a spirit, who had come to us from Holstein, read the tragedies of the great Corneille and Racine. Above all did His Majesty take pleasure in Mithridates, because of his courage and resolution in misfortune. But the works of Boileau he destroyed, this author having ventured to call the great hero Alexander wild and foolish. Evenings Poniatowski and Grothusen would be called to His Majesty to play the game of chess; this was a congenial whiling away of the time, for thereby King Charles exhibited those qualities so natural to him, such as foresight, cautiousness, silence, and calculation. But the piece nearest to the King, His Majesty named the Field-Marshal, instead of the Queen, and thus was it called by the officers. His Majesty would often lose deliberately because of his bringing the king into action, when he should have stayed behind. With the General Axel Sparre and Karl Gustaf Hård, did His Majesty also love to ride and converse in the scanty manner that was his custom.

Praise be to God, His Majesty's foot was now almost well, and though he, because of the grievous hurt, did

favor the one leg until his dying day, and this was apparent at such rare times as he was not a-horseback, yet did he derive no other inconvenience from it.

The Turks having in their great admiration builded him a house where he might, during the storms and in the winter, divert himself with greater ease than in the frail tent whose fine trappings could not keep out the cold, His Majesty now set about improving his fortunes in earnest, hoping not only to return to his provinces, but also to bring disaster to Tsar Peter and his armies. His chief plan was to turn the Turks and Tartars against the Muscovites and let loose the innumerable Mussulman hordes against the southern provinces of the Tsar. 'T was no easy matter, for though the fortress of Azof in the possession of the Muscovites was a festering sore to the Sultan, he having by its loss given over the key to the Black Sea, yet had he no stomach for the great risk of war, hoping by His Majesty being as it were within his power, he might with cunning obtain many concessions without declaring war.

Night and day did His Majesty ponder much upon these weighty matters; indeed Rehnsköld said unto poor Gyllenkrook, who so soon was to meet such great disaster, that no one could fathom the King's *dessein*, for when he lay in peace and comfortable sleep, then did His Majesty work more with his thoughts than anyone could possibly imagine.

First of all, His Majesty deemed it wise to send other cunning men to the Embassy in Constantinople where Neugeweber was trying to gain access to the Sultan, and find favor in his eyes. Among those that left us for this

purpose was Poniatowski. Of him would I here say that he was both brave and high-hearted, adventurous and of most exquisite politics, knowing how to treat every man according to his desire. As a young maiden listens to her beloved, so did this noble colonel hang upon the lips of His Majesty. For many years to come, his eagerness to serve, his resolution and excellent conduct never failed him or his master. The star of hope was ever rising upon his firmament and, though he was both hated and threatened by those Turks that plotted his destruction, he never faltered. Had his own country borne more like unto him, her fortunes would indeed have been different.

By that obliging carriage and complaisance which brings down the drawbridge of the female heart and lets the besieger in, Poniatowski, lacking thereto neither artfulness nor gold, so captivated the heart of a young Jewess whose office was to feed with sweetmeats the Sultana Valide, that not only did she offer the Sultana these delicacies, but also many a letter dwelling upon the "bravour" and misfortunes of his great master, which awoke both compassion and admiration in her heart. And as such feelings spread like wildfire amid captive women of high degree, many a heart under silken tunic behind the walls of the imperial seraglio sighed for King Charles. When at the call of the priests at sunset they would face the holy city of Mecca and bow themselves down to the ground, at which time they would repeat their prayers, amidst them would they full privily manage to slip in "Allah, versina krak suet," which doth mean, "God guard the King of the

Swedes." Some of the sweet lips could not refrain, between the embraces of their lord and master, to ask him with much ardor "when it would be his pleasure to help the wounded lion, lying outside his golden gates."

To assist this brave Adonis in his arduous labors came wise counsels and many a letter writ unto his influential friends by the mighty Khan of the Tartars. For this Khan, who was a little fellow with a long gray beard and much knowledge and merriment in his heart, loved King Charles because of his courage, and he hated greatly the Muscovites for their perfidy and the much harm they did to his subjects.

Great was the need of this powerful friend, for many were the wiles and intrigues and the tyranny of the Grand Vizier, Mehemet Ali. First he proposed to send His Majesty back to his lands by a great fleet, which we knew would not reach beyond the waters where sailed the galleys of Venice; and then did he ask why would we not be convoyed by the ships of the States-General, which their ambassador, Mr. Colyer, had offered?

The hatred of the Grand Vizier grew apace as the Muscovite Ambassador, Mr. Peter Tolstoy, gave unto him not only kegs filled with gold, but other costly presents, till his treasure-house was full and he might have purchased all within the Turkish Empire excepting alone the womenfolk, they being the property of the Sultan.

Poniatowski's high courage reaching almost to foolhardiness, he now conceived the daring plan of deposing the Grand Vizier, though a failure was sure to cost him his head. He knew that this tyrannous fellow not only

was displeasing to the Mother-Sultana, but also that the Chief of the Black Eunuchs and the Aga of the janissaries did hate him mightily, so that it was easy to incite them to speak against the Grand Vizier, as also the young favorite, Coumourgi Ali-Pasha, the son of a carrier of charcoal, as his name does signify, for in the Turkish tongue *coumour* means charcoal. God alone knows by what sleights and shifts the man made his way among the besetting perils of this intrigue; how oft and by what means he avoided knife, cord and poison, and withal made smooth the way for his accomplishment. Thus in time he set up a plan whereby to reach the Sultan and hand him a memorial which would plainly reveal his Grand Vizier's heinous treatment of His Majesty, King Charles, and how deserving he was of safe escort by land as well as assistance against the Tsar.

Poniatowski knew that the Sultan went into his mosque every Friday, surrounded by his *soulaks*, which are his guardsmen, wearing turbans with such high feathers that the populace cannot see their Lord. And now when anyone has aught whereupon he would humbly ask clemency, he writes upon a roll, and seeks to mix himself with the guards, holding on high the petition or roll, but again more oft does the Sultan beckon to his Aga to charge himself with the petitioner. Small matters one durst not present; for them the complainant would risk having the offending hand cut off because of its presumption and impudence. Never has a minister been complained of by a writ, and much less a grand vizier, for such a course were insanity.

But Poniatowski wrote fully all that was in his heart

concerning Mehemet Ali, as well as his beloved King. He hit upon taking an artless Livonian boy, which he had bought out of slavery; and, dressing him in Turkish clothes, he instructed him how to comport himself. Two drabants were likewise dressed in Turkish garments, to spy out the best place where the boy might find success, and then they should go a bit from him, but not too far to see what befell. By their advice did the boy place himself just outside the door of the mosque upon his knees, with his memorial above his head. And the Sultan in coming forth from the recital of his prayers, saw the boy and, liking him, himself received the roll, and thrust it in his bosom, which was a good sign.

A few days thereafter, while the Sultan was honoring Mehemet by dining with him, he suddenly boxes his ears, stating that it was because of his avarice. This was told Poniatowski by one of the servants in his pay. This was a second sign. Further, the Sultan wrote to the Khan of the Tartars to come forthwith to Constantinople, for he would take counsel with him.

At this time did there also reach us good tidings from Sweden, where great events had gone forward. The King of Denmark had crossed the Sound and descended with a great army in our southern province of Scania, intending to invade the country now without army or master.

But not alone did the old soldiers, returned from earlier campaigns and now pensioned, get new life and desire once again to buckle on their belts, but young peasant lads and boys ran with good-will from city and

farm and had themselves enrolled as soldiers when they learned that Count Magnus Stenbock, who had the confidence of all, would lead them against the Danes.

It came to be a bloody battle at Helsingborg, where the Buck [1] won the greatest and most glorious of his victories, leaving the field as dotted with Danish corpses as with the crows at seed-time. This news reaching even to within the walls of the Seraglio greatly aided our good cause, as also did the popularity of His Majesty with the common rabble, who would daily congregate before their mosques and cry to be led to war against the Muscovite. As a first mark of his favor, the Sultan sent unto His Majesty twenty-five beautiful Arabian, Egyptian, and Turkish steeds, with costly trappings, but the gifts of swords and horses which came from the Grand Vizier were returned forthwith.

A short time thereafter came at last the joyous tidings that Ali Pasha had been deposed, his immense riches which he had laid up for his own comfort here on earth had been seized by the Sultan, and Ali himself had probably received the fate he so richly deserved, of being strangled by the guards. Thus is proven, for so much we saw, that he who one day rules over a mighty province may, through the folly of his actions, upon the next be selling coffees and tobaccos from a booth.

His place was filled for a while by the most excellent Numan Kuperli, who, feeling his new office too onerous, was shortly succeeded by Mehemet Baltadschi. This Mehemet, who was Pasha of Syria, came originally

[1] "The Buck," was the popular name given Field-Marshal Stenbock by King and populace alike. — Ed.

from Florence where he was known to the good citizens as "Julio." His father, having come into Turkey to trade in silken cloth, the child grew up in the faith of the Prophet, and as he increased in years and wisdom, had risen from one honorable office to another.

Events were now to move more rapidly. As for Tolstoy, he was half stripped of his clothes, set upon a sorry nag, to be exposed to the derision of the populace, and then imprisoned, where he belonged, within the fortress of the seven towers.

The great captains of the realm having now assembled in Constantinople, there was held a solemn divan where it was decided to declare war upon the Tsar unless he accede to the demands of the Porte. Peter was to surrender Azof after razing all the fortifications he had there erected, he should evacuate Poland and recognize Stanislaus as its rightful king, and restore unto the Kossacks their lawful freedom; he was then to destroy St. Petersburg, and give back to Sweden, not alone the conquered Baltic provinces, but also all the prisoners and trophies taken at Poltava. In case of Peter's refusal, the Porte would march upon his empire and destroy his cities and peoples.

Tsar Peter was much taken up with great business, for not only was his favorite dwarf married amid great ceremony in the palace of Prince Menzicoff to the dwarf of Catherine Alexiewna, but an order having been published throughout Muscovy compelling all *Kneses*, *Boyars* and noblemen to bring their male and female dwarfs to St. Petersburg, Tsar Peter was now occupied coupling them in such manner as he deemed fit and thereafter

celebrating the nuptials. Amid this great matchmaking and bedding and carousing did the courier arrive from Constantinople.

It was told us that, when these demands reached Peter, his rage made him foam at the mouth and blood diffuse the white in his eyeballs.

The Khan, most joyful at the march of events, wrote to King Charles: —

To the Sovereign of the Everfaithful in the Grace of Jesus, the Mighty Protector of the Church, the King of Sweden, our gracious, dear and generous friend, Most Mighty King:

Since we have sent our heartiest greeting and wishes for all prosperity, we desire that the Friendship and correspondence between us may be confirmed and bear much fruit. During my sojourn here, everything has gone forward with the greatest success and joy. For, God be praised, all our affairs have been completely forwarded and promised success by the Ottoman court. Our public affairs, on which Almighty God gave his blessing, have been consummated in the happy and blessed month of Beiram, in the capital itself. Which from your side must be kept in continual remembrance until we with joy and more news may see and divert each other. Written in the same month in Stamboul, in the beginning of the year 1222.

Thus at the close of the year of our Lord 1710, King Charles was once more to see a mighty army march against the Muscovite, and to this end all was going well forward. Not so however in Bender or in Sweden, where want and misery were sitting in the saddle.

With the King so far and so long from home, all authority was likewise banished. The people were frightened and most dejected. By the battle of Poltava they had been awakened from their flattering dreams of conquest, and the awakening was terrible.

Their amazement at the defeat left them between despair and remorseful outpouring in prayer.

And then came the pest.

After raging in London and Copenhagen, it had reached the Baltic ports, and as it drew nearer and nearer to our country, the Collegium Medicum of Stockholm found it wise to hold constant sessions and give much of their valuable time to discussing wherewith it might be arrested, and how the ignorant and dirty people might be warned amid their foul living. The Collegium passed many a wise ordinance which should have hindered it from reaching us. Thus were two special pest-medici appointed, and they were given full command over the old corpse men. And also the barbers were well organized, the Societas Chirurgica being allowed, in these troublous times, eighteen masters for the many apprentices and boys. Of the nine apothecaries, there should be four which were pest apothecaries, and from these the poor should obtain good and serviceable medicaments. Thus was our home, as it were, swept and garnished.

Despite all this, the pest crept in among us, showing first its evil face along the southern shores and the islands on the coast. Therefore did our wise Collegium Medicum still further ordain that, to hinder all communication with the infested, they should paint upon the street-doors of their dwellings a white cross, as a warning that none should enter; under pain of death should the crosses be removed from the panels, and such as still lived in the houses and were yet well, should, in sallying forth to procure sustenance, if they were

males, carry a white staff, and if women, have a white cloth bound over the mouth. There should be neither baptismal beer-feasts, nor funeral carouses, nor even wedding parties, and wherever cats or dogs were to be found, they were forthwith to be put to death, as they were prone to carry with them much contagion on their many prowls. The deaths continuing and even increasing, it was ordained that even the air under the Swedish heavens be purified. And for this, were all good burghers to burn brushwood and manure and other things that would give out smoke, and not alone should so be done in the houses, but also upon the market-places and common squares at the hours of seven in the morning, at noontide, and at five in the evening, before taking nourishment and at the ringing of the church bells. The Archbishop being asked what good counsel he might give, advised to take

> "One ounce of Godly foresight,
> A pound of true penitence,
> Two pounds of good patience —

to beat this fine in a mortar, to make thereof a salve or plaster and apply it twice a day, upon rising in the morning, and upon going to bed in the evening."

But all availed naught. The pest and starvation seemed to strive with one another for mastership in the miserable country. All day long, carts filled with the dead passed through the streets, surrounded by their carriers in black oil-cloth and preceded by a guard of honor, consisting of two of the worst women from the reformatory ringing bells, at which signal the houses where lay corpses were opened and the bodies thrust out

into the cart. At last it grew so terrible that even noble maidens were infected by merely seeing from the palace windows the heads of the dead wobbling beneath at the back of the carts. Hunger was so great that one would see the babe tugging for nourishment at the breasts of the mother dead of starvation.

For the populace there was indeed little food, as what could be found or taken forcibly from the people must be collected in the great warehouses for His Majesty's armies. In Stockholm alone there died twenty thousand souls.

But I must back to my King.

At Bender, now that the war with Russia was going forward, our chief trouble was to find money; for though the Jews were both our eyes and ears, — and easy to recognize, they being forbidden the turban, — yet they did us but little service in our necessity to feed several thousand, seemingly having small faith in our promises of payment. Moreover, Mr. Grothusen, who was His Majesty's treasurer, kept his accounts in a strange manner, being betrayed into this by loving, like his master, to dispense with a liberal hand. One day, when he presented his accounts to the King, there having been sixty thousand dollars in the treasury and but ten of these disbursed to the Swedes and janissaries, His Majesty makes inquiry as to the remaining fifty. Grothusen replies, he has himself used the remainder; whereupon His Majesty turning to me, who by chance was also in the royal presence, says: "We like that our friends make their accounts short, and approve the statement."

THE NEED OF MONEY

King Louis did indeed send us moneys, but the transaction was a difficult one. His Most Christian Majesty had sent as ambassador to our camp a Mr. Desaleurs, who spoke but his own French tongue. King Charles, though thoroughly familiar therewith, replied unto him in Latin, which the Frenchman did not understand. An interpreter was however found, who translated the Latin spoken by His Majesty, and our payments were satisfactorily agreed upon. From the English merchants in Constantinople, we also obtained money, and furthermore borrowed the great sum of gold left behind by Mazeppa, and from the Sultan himself a million dollars of the realm, which was equal to two million Swedish riksdaler in silver. To help this great need for money, the councillors in Sweden decided most humbly to request of the Queen Dowager, and also of the Princess Ulrica Eleanora, mercifully to give up whatever precious ornaments they possessed in order to relieve the terrible condition of the royal treasury. This they did full gladly, the good Princess declaring with tears in her eyes that she would as gladly give her life for the benefit of His Majesty, and of what worth to her were costly jewels and gold and silver? Wherever it was possible, whether of Jews or Christian merchants, of the rich and kindly-disposed around us, as well as of foreign governments, we borrowed every ducat or dollar we could obtain, whatever might be the interest demanded thereon. Even unto this day, that I sit here writing my memoirs, is my poor country staggering under this debt, contracted by our hard-pressed monarch while in Bender.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FIGHT AT BENDER

THE great war had begun, and all our troubles were soon forgotten. Tartars, Kossacks, and Poles under Potocki were already, early in spring, burning and plundering in the Ukraine, and the horse's tail being hung out in Constantinople, the Turkish hordes were soon gathering from all the wide lands under the rule of the Sultan. In the Muscovite Empire, Tsar Peter had commanded the two blood-red banners to be waved above his head, so that his regiments also might gather from far and near. At Adrianople were at least 250,000 men, the Khan of the Tartars too there, in fine feather, at the head of his innumerable horsemen. The joy of the people was inexpressible.

It is too long for me to tell how the folly of the Tsar led him to march his army through Wallachia, without supplies wherewith to feed them; how the Tartars swam the rivers and surrounded the Muscovites, and how Peter was finally led into a trap by the river Pruth, from which there was no escape. The heat of the summer was great; deep was the sand, and there was neither forest nor house nor water which might afford refreshment to the Muscovite. Greater and greater grew his hunger and thirst as he turned hither and thither to escape the tens of thousands of Turks and Tartars who hemmed him in on all sides.

The Muscovites were still further impeded by the many Muscovite women who accompanied them, as also the great number of foreigners with their womenfolk and children. At last Peter burned his baggage and endeavored to retreat. But there were Tartars in a close circle all around him, and Turkish cannon upon all the heights. Seeing that all was lost, the Tsar rushed into his tent in desperation, giving orders to the guard to let no one enter. Then, falling in an epileptic fit, his face growing black as the earth, he foamed at the mouth and stabbed around him all he could strike, so that the attendants fled without. Before the brave Catherine enters, as it were to the wild beast in his cage, I would once more digress and relate somewhat as to her, which I know to be of the truth.

A Swedish soldier by the honest name of Jens Rabe was furnishing provisions for one of our regiments in Riga, when he fell a victim to the charms of the plump widow Moritz, whom he forthwith married, begetting a daughter by her before he fell ill and died. The widow, being thus left without support, the young daughter, when twelve years old, was let out, first to serve in a hostelry, and later in the house of Master Gluck, who was Provost of the churches of Marienburg. Shortly after we had won the glorious battle by the Düna, the daughter Martha married a young Swedish corporal, who had seen her on the street and become enamoured of the roundness of her form and her sprightly answers. Now I pass to the time when the Muscovites under the Field-Marshal Scheremetoff had entered Marienburg; and this great commander sees her one day when she

is so rash as to venture forth upon the street; and takes possession of her for six months' time, when he was forced, to his great chagrin, to cede her to Menzicoff.[1] With him she dwelt in great comfort, free from all fear of new violence during the space of two years. Next comes Tsar Peter, who, dining with Menzicoff, spies Martha a-peeping through the door at his great person, and having ordered her pulled into the dining-hall by the guardsman, he tells the wench she may continue to look upon him for some time to come.

Thus goes it in the world — those of the lowest and humblest origin being oft elevated to the greatest honors and glory. Martha served the Tsar Peter in such manner that he soon became aware of her great and resolute spirit. In this strange slave, who knew neither book nor quill, did he see the qualities of a great sovereign, albeit she had known but few of those virtues which enhance the value of her sex in the eyes of men. Right sensibly he now rid himself of his spouse Ottokefa, and in the year 1707, as I have previously related, did he declare Catherine Alexiewna as she now styled herself, his lawful spouse before God and man. Scarce was there matter of state or import in which Peter did not consult with her, nor campaign in which she was not by his side. By the softness and complaisance of her nature, as well as by her lively humor, did she sweeten all about her, yes, even bring her great spouse back to reason when the gloomy fits of madness would overtake him and devils enter into him.

[1] Originally a pastry-cook's apprentice, rising to become general and prince, and finally dying in misery in Siberia.

I did never see her, for I was at Bender when the great affair by the Pruth took place, as well as also, God be praised, escaped from the field of Poltava; but the Countess of Baireuth wrote unto me of Catherine that

she was little and plump and much burned by the sun. One needed but to see her to divine her low origin. She was so rigged out, one might mistake her for a German play-actress and her dress might have been bought from a pedler of old clothes. It was dirty and covered with silver embroideries. The front of it over her great bosom was adorned with precious stones which formed a network studded with many small jewels. She also wore a dozen orders and just as many pictures of saints fastened on all over her outer garments, so that one thought one heard the approach of a mule when she made any movement. Indeed, with her round figure, her sly, pugged nose, low forehead and plump bosom, she looks all the world like a good cook and hostess of a German inn.

In truth, the great wisdom which lay in Tsar Peter's government showed itself also in his holding fast Catherine Alexiewna. For not only did she keep clean his linen and mend his shirts, but in later days she drove his enemies out of the Empire and put order in the provinces. And I have lived to see in these latter days, when my beloved King has so long lain dead, the same genius which raised Catherine to be Empress of all the Russias, lead her, upon the death of Peter, to claim for herself the Empire. And I have seen Europe marvel that a woman could, without knowing how to read or write, yet fill with glory a great throne. I will now proceed with my memoirs.

After Peter had raged in his tent for the space of two hours, Catherine, who knew no denial, comes to the guard and demands entrance; but he fearing greatly to

admit her, she gives her solemn oath to be answerable for the consequences. She is no sooner inside than she throws herself down, bathed in tears. Peter then raising her up, she takes on a happier mien and begs him to call his generals together to listen to her counsel. This order was forthwith carried out, and as soon as the audience was over, Catherine writ a letter to the Grand Vizier requesting an armistice for some days. Then, gathering together all her jewels and precious stones, and all the gold and silver upon which she could lay her hands, with the furs of sables and black foxes, she sent them with the letter unto the Grand Vizier.

Despite the rage of the brave Khan of the Tartars, the Turkish cannon are shortly ordered to cease their fire, and the articles of peace are drawn up. Now, both Poniatowski and Potocki had been in the thick of the fray, being among the officers of the Khan. Seeing the Tsar so safely bottled up by the Pruth, they had dispatched couriers to His Majesty at Bender to bring him the good tidings, which as soon as King Charles had read, he mounts his horse and arrives where the council was being held, even as the terms of peace had been signed, but while the Muscovites were yet amongst us.

The Grand Vizier, hearing to his dismay and rage that the King of Sweden was there, rid out to meet him and do him honor. But His Majesty made as if he did not see him, riding his horse straight into the great tent of the Grand Vizier. Dismounting there, he seated himself uppermost upon the sofa, under the holy banner of Mahomet. The Vizier had ordered the banner of Mahomet

to be brought out of the treasury, where it is preserved as their holiest possession, for they say this banner was borne by the Angel Gabriel to Mahomet when he was once in a furious engagement with Christians, as a sign he would gain the victory. It should only be carried in sorest need, and then all over seven years of age who would be called true Mussulmans should list under it or be held for renegades. The Grand Vizier and the Khan did also sit down, while all the others remained standing.

Says His Majesty, "Here is a fine army assembled. It is a shame 'tis not better employed"; to which the Grand Vizier replied that God had given it unto him.

The King returns very quick upon him.

"It is not necessary that it continue longer fighting, affairs having been so happily settled," said the Grand Vizier.

Thereupon King Charles, looking him straight in the eye, which was to no man's liking, said: "I hear you have made peace, and my interests have been neglected."

The Vizier, averting his gaze, answered, "I have won so much for the Porte, that I am satisfied."

"And you could have won a thousand times more, for you had the Tsar and his whole army in your hand," spoke bravely the King: for he knew not fear, either in speech or action.

"Who would govern the Tsar's kingdom if I took him prisoner?" replied the Grand Vizier.

"You need not bother your head about that," answered King Charles.

And the Turkish generals gazed at each other in

amazement, but dared not look up at the Grand Vizier who remained silent.

"Give me liberty," continues His Majesty; "there may yet be time to save my cause, and I will defend it before the Sultan. It shall not cost you a man, for I know where I can at once gather people who will follow me."

And those Poles who were there amidst the generals told me that a strange tingling of the blood was felt in the veins of all who listened, were they friend or foe, so that they unwittingly gripped the hilts of their swords, and their hearts beat against their ribs. They would have run out and followed King Charles unto heaven or hell, his words having sounded like a trumpet-call down into their souls.

But the Grand Vizier thought of his great treasures and those others which Catherine Alexiewna had promised him; so he spoke: "No, 'tis too late, we must now abide by the peace we have concluded."

When the King rose from under the holy banner, the Mussulmans bent down to the earth, and the Grand Vizier looked him not in the face as he went out to his charger. While he was returning to Bender, the Tsar was marching away with flying banners and music playing, but the janissaries and Tartars made much loud complaint, saying it was a shame that the brave King who was their guest had been so miserably holpen.

A great hatred for King Charles entered now the heart of Mehemet, the Vizier, and he wrote unto us in Bender that our supplies would be cut off and His Majesty should return to Sweden by Poland, the Tsar having by

the glorious terms of peace promised him safe-conduct through the Republic. Unto the Sultan had the Khan, as also King Charles, written full particulars of all that had gone forward and the villainy of the Grand Vizier, but the Sultan feared doing aught as long as the great army was under the command of his minister. So he bided his time, bestowing upon the Grand Vizier much praise, as also costly gifts, until such time as the army was dispersed and the Grand Vizier within his power. Then did this rascal receive his just deserts. His secretaries had their heads cut off and set up on stakes on the walls of the seraglio, their bodies being left three days in the streets to be kicked and spat upon. All the Tsar's money and jewels were placed in the imperial treasury; Mehemet's house was given over to the janissaries to plunder; while he himself was sent to Mitylene as a prisoner, where he haply died of misery and great mortification. Jussuf Pasha was made Grand Vizier, and the good Khan of the Tartars was given a red silken coat lined with black sables and a sword inlaid with diamonds.

But it is high time that we retrace our steps and see what was going on in the royal headquarters at Bender whilst all the military preparations had gone forward 'mid the Turks, and the campaign had ended in so melancholy and disgraceful a manner.

Unto the distracted regency in Sweden had His Majesty writ constantly in relation to the new levies to be made, the moneys to be raised, and the armies to be set on foot, as also the new fleet to be manned and provisioned. But the poor regents were indeed at their

wits' ends, although they would full gladly have sacrificed all they had themselves. With King Charles so far away, the ship of state was without a rudder, drifting most pitifully upon the sea of northern disaster.

Early and late His Majesty was busy, rising at three of the clock to occupy himself with affairs of importance. His little city at Bender had now been builded according to his own plan. The royal dwelling was a fine stone house in the centre, with chambers in the style of the Court of King Louis as well as of the Sultan, and filled with many costly gifts he had received. Next thereto came the great chancellery, also of stone, and a spacious kitchen, where two master-cooks ruled over their apprentices, boys, and scullery fellows. The little building close by was the King's silver-chamber, and adjoining were the larder and the cellar. To the south lay the two great stables, which contained twelve swift courier or post horses. Close by were naturally the dwellings of the stable-boys, saddle-grooms, and head grooms. Then came the dwellings of the soldiers, who lived two in each bunk by the sides of broad streets with Swedish names. A big square lay in the middle, around which were the houses of the high officers. The Turks and Tartars and Kossacks also had somewhere places in which to sleep when they therefor had time and permission.

With many matters, as aforesaid, was His Majesty occupied. Into the far East did he send an expedition of learned officers, to study and make drawings of the marvels in Palestine and Egypt, and thus bring knowl-

edge of strange and wondrous things to those at home who thirsted after learning.

His Majesty charged the travellers in particular to make careful designs of the tomb of our most blessed Saviour and the city of his birth, as well as also of the course of the Jordan, the forests of Lebanon, and the hills of Nazareth; likewise to take many careful notes when they beheld the pyramids, columns, obelisks, sphinxes, and the tombs of the mummies. When they passed through the city of Troy, so dear to His Majesty from the leaves of the great Greek, they were to see all the rarities this most ancient town afforded, that they might upon their return, of evenings for many a month, read to His Majesty of the wonders of that city, in whose campaigns he had so often gloried. In the art of painting did he also take much interest, and also in the many designs sent him by the excellent Tessin, all relating to the rebuilding of the palace at Stockholm, which had suffered so much from fire while King Charles the Eleventh of blessed memory still lay unburied therein.

The great Turks who came to make respectful visits showed much astonishment that no seraglio had been builded for a flock of womenfolk, or any animal-house for lions and leopards; but His Majesty felt no need of either, and in truth, having no seraglio, he escaped the pangs of jealousy that oft kept the high Turkish officers awake during prowling hours. His Majesty would offer his guests — who, after leaving their slippers without, were sitting with crossed feet upon the rugs we had ordered spread — all manner of luscious fruits, such

as grapes, melons, figs, walnuts, almonds, lemons, pomegranates, and other delicacies, and would thereto have his trumpeters blow sweet music. Seldom did the Turks eat meat, for being very abstemious, the milk of the ass would be their habitual nourishment. Not so however the Tartars, who, when not fed for several days, would between man and wife devour a whole sheep, eating when invited until rolled out of the house, from the very pains in their intestines.

Little comfort did His Majesty derive from the ambassadors of the Christian powers, who should indeed have been as brothers unto him. The French ambassador alone pleaded his cause. Austria cared not for the misfortunes of the nation which, since the days of the glorious Gustavus Adolphus, had been the head of the Protestant faith; England and the States-General must plot the ruin of Sweden because of her desire to transform the Baltic into a *mare clausum;* Prussia cast longing eyes upon Swedish Pomerania and Stettin; Hanover coveted our good cities of Bremen and Verden; while Russia and Saxony were up to every villainous trick in Constantinople of which the fiend incarnate were capable.

His Majesty was much discomfited and sorrowful when he here heard of the death of the little Prince, though all he said, as he turned to ride forth by himself was, "He was the best of my friends!" After the battle of Poltava, Prince Max Emanuel had with a broken heart determined to return home to his own principality of Würtemberg, but he had died upon the long journey. And here would I break off in my story to say, that

the short life of this excellent youth was the tale of a hero, and like a lovely dream. His memory will ever be cherished by posterity. His generous free temper won him the love of all, while his bravour gave him the honor and admiration of the soldiers. His modesty in good fortune and his excellent conduct in all circumstances were examples to his comrades.

Over his grave those who knew and loved him and our great Charles have had inscribed: "*Una anima, una mens in duobus corporibus visa sit.*" Peace be unto his soul!

From Sweden came letters and gifts, the Princess Ulrica Eleanora having bethought herself of sending His Majesty not only a wig but also a skull-cap. He knew not what to do with them, loathing much the running of sweat behind the ears. The Princess's letter showed His Majesty however which way the wind blew, for she wrote in this manner: —

I have so oft commenced and again thought to abstain from writing, but because of Your Majesty's great grace and the tenderness you have hitherto shown your servant, do I now take courage. I venture to fly to Your Majesty's brotherly and fatherly care, with the humblest prayer that Your Majesty not only will well read this to the end, but also give your gracious consideration to my very humble question, as it concerns my present well-being. Despite my bashfulness I am forced myself to present it. With more than a timid heart must I confide in Your Majesty. Her Majesty the Queen has not had the strength to write to you in the matter, but has ordered me so to do, although I would greatly have wished to escape so doing, it being far more decent for Her Majesty the Queen.

First I would ask Your Majesty to consider how deserted I should be if the Queen, who is daily failing, should, as seems very like, soon pass away.

Many suitors have been proposed to me,[1] but either they have not presented themselves, or their position has offered no advantage. The one Her Majesty now proposes,[2] in another letter to Your Majesty, seems the only one whose house can place one in a more advantageous posture, for he will rule over a lovely country when the Lord his father is no more, and he himself is of universal good repute and highly considered for his bravery in this war. He is thereto almost the only one of all German gentlemen who is reported as having lived a good and virtuous life with his former spouse. He is also older than I. Your Majesty knows what is the fate of princesses, that they are more counselled according to the advantage of the state than for what may be to their own advantage and satisfaction, and that for political considerations they often suffer disappointment and unhappiness.

I now know nothing more than that I, under God's disposal, lay all this in Your Majesty's brotherly and fatherly care, with the assurance that, in case Your Majesty in your answer does not find this match advantageous, I will take it in good part without spleen, and shall try to leave all further thought upon the subject.

His Majesty, gathering from this letter the lovesick condition into which Her Royal Highness, the Princess, had fallen, gave in the kindness of his heart his gracious sanction to the marriage. I dare not say Her Highness knew all her lover's weaknesses, as for instance the manner in which he gained admittance to the closets of young ladies during their hours of toilet. Being a wonderful mimic, he could imitate the voices of their mammas or governesses so skilfully, that the ladies would often admit him, little suspecting what a wolf in sheep's clothing they were letting in.

[1] Prince Charles of Denmark; the Hanoverian prince, later King George II of England; the Crown Prince of Prussia, and Prince John William of Saxe-Gotha.

[2] Prince Fredrik of Hessen.

Until her death did this excellent Princess show honor and obedience to the amourous gentleman she now married.

In our camp were some 1400 Swedes, 4000 Poles, and a like number of Kossacks. His Majesty was now sore troubled how, without moneys or proper escort, to conduct them through Poland to his own lands. This, however, the Grand Vizier in his complaisance did shortly arrange, for the Sultan sent to King Charles twelve hundred purses [1] of silver, two hundred chariots for the baggage, five hundred fine horses and a number of camels, and gave orders unto a sufficient number of Turks and Tartars to be our escort. Our ambassador, the Funck, was also received by the Sultan with much honor and extraordinary ceremonies. At the hour of three in the morning did he leave his quarters, and proceed by water to the seraglio, where a horse was awaiting him, which he mounted. He was followed by all the Swedish people of the embassy on foot, as well as also a great lot of French merchants drawn thither by curiosity. In this manner Funck rid through the first courtyard of the seraglio to the second gate, where he dismounted by an elevated marble bench, for no one dares ride into the inner courtyard. This formed a fine square filled with laurels and cypresses and other umbrageous trees, under which strayed roebucks and stags. Here Funck thought of his hunting dogs and how their mouths would have watered. On all sides were wide recesses supported by marble columns under which stood, careless and idle,

[1] The Turkish purse of about the year 1700 contained 500 piastres, or about 1500 French livres of that time.

both janissaries and others. On one side was there a council-chamber in which sat, falsely smiling, the Grand Vizier, attired in a white satin suit lined with sables. In passing by him our ambassador, dissembling his anger, gave him a nod.

Now, at the farther end of the courtyard sat a company of pashas in white, gold-embroidered coats and white trousers. Funck was made to stop when he reached them, and there came running servants who did indeed wear garments far finer than even the King's councillors have in Stockholm. They brought bags of money, from which, as soon as they were set down, the pashas began to pay very many servants. For it is the custom to pay the servants when a foreign ambassador is given audience, in order to impress him, not only with the great riches and *grandesse* of the Porte, but also with the number of his attendants. The gold and silver being distributed, the Grand Vizier from his council-hall wrote a billet to the Sultan to inform him that the Swedish ambassador was there. The Sultan's reply was carried high in the air, and all rose and bowed humbly to do homage to it.

The chamber of audience where Funck was admitted was small and dark. He said, the floor of it was set down into the ground and covered with such fine red satin bordered with gold that it seemed a sin to walk upon such costly stuffs. The windows were of real glass, though all of those of the other fine halls were of paper. In the white turban upon the Sultan's head were stuck two black feathers. When Funck arrived, two Capuzi Passi seized him by the arms and led him in before the

THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR FUNCK RECEIVED IN AUDIENCE BY THE GRAND VIZIER

The Janissaries receiving their Salaries during the Audience in order to impress the Swede

throne; so here he makes proper reverence. This over, they draw him some steps backward to a respectful distance, where they release him, though from a distance, stationed among the black eunuchs and dumbars, they did not cease watching him even as a worthy cat would a mouse-hole.

When now all had become quiet, Funck gave His Majesty greeting in eloquent Latin. The Sultan, who sat upon his throne, not only permitted him to see him in profile as was customary, but actually turned his full face with laughing mouth toward Funck. While our ambassador was in this manner taking note of how pleasantly the Sultan was disposed and with what complaisance the great ruler's mind dwelt upon the business in hand, the Munzer Aga approached the Sultan and, after a most humble reverence, whispered some words in his ear. To these the Sultan made no other response than a very slight horizontal movement with the palm of his right hand upward.

When the time for departing from the hall of audience arrived, the Capuzzi Passi again took Funck by his arms. Descending the stairs, our ambassador did make note of nine heads which had recently been severed from their bodies and were placed in a row by the side of the door of exit. This gave the Funck the explanation of the gesture just made by the Sultan, and he thanked the Lord on high he was not in the service of so laconic and terrible a master.

Funck passes again through the courtyard, where the Grand Vizier sits in his white satin garb, and this time he shows his teeth twice in smiling at Funck, meaning by

this he was to stop, for the Vizier desired to speak with him. Thereupon he invited Funck to dinner.

This meal did take place so silently that not a word was spoken, nor even a hiccough heard. The only sound came from the bearing on and off of the victuals, and this was done with great order and quiet. Indeed, all present sat as if they had been hewn in stone, their eyelids well-nigh closed, for the reason that the Sultan had seated himself up under the roof behind a small glass window in order to see Funck eat, and this all his Turkish subjects knew, as also that they would be beheaded if they dared raise their eyes. Funck, who related to me all that went forward, did catch sight of the Sultan as he was about to swallow a titbit, but being both wise and sly, he made as if he had not observed him. Nevertheless Funck was sad that he could not enjoy his food with merry discourse and laughter.

The Grand Vizier and Funck ate alone, while the others ran up to another table where they were given all manner of victuals, some in bowls and some in their hands, and some in small sacks which they carried with them. Now came a table servant and placed over the knees of Funck and the Grand Vizier a colored towel, long enough to reach all around their waists. Thereupon the servants fell upon their knees and held the towel taut, even as we do with a great blanket when in country games the swains toss their sweethearts up into the air. Upon the towel was placed thin bread which had been baked in ashes, and each one received a whole handful of wooden spoons and a tin dish with three blades of green grass. Funck thought this strange fare,

but the Grand Vizier made signs by patting his abdomen and rolling his eyes pleasantly around, that chewing of them was good for the quieting and dispelling of the acids in the stomach that take away appetite.

Thereupon came a dish with salad and one with roasted meat called *cabal.* Funck soon saw that he who tore first at the steak with his fingers or the knife he had by him, got the titbits, and he who swallowed quickest got the lion's share, so he did his best, getting many a piece of fat well into his mouth just as the Grand Vizier would reach out for it. After the meat came some thirty other courses, with fine baking and rice and honey, but of all they could not eat, for their stomachs were inflated and becoming painful. This made Funck right sad, for the confectionery was of preserved fruits, such as he had never seen before. But the ambassador's gullet was as full as that of a gorged vulture. The meal being finished with coffee, they washed their faces and hands with rosewater and the servants smoked their faces and heads full with all manner of sweet-smelling incense. The Grand Vizier must hasten to his harem, but Funck returns full sadly to the loneliness of his own abode.

And here would I further relate, being amid bloody scenes, that the daughters and the sisters of the Sultan, of whom there are myriads and who are married to the viziers and great nobles of the realm, do all inhabit their own palaces; but of sons and brothers there are none, for the male child, as soon as his sex is ascertained at birth, is forthwith strangled, and by the hands of the same physician who delivers the mother. This is a well-established law never to be violated.

Disquieting rumors now reached His Majesty that, not only did the Republic of Poland and King Augustus intend to refuse him free passage, but that Tsar Peter had withdrawn none of his army from Poland as stipulated by the Peace at Pruth, but on the contrary, had come to a new agreement with the Grand Vizier by virtue of which he might leave his troops there for the capture of King Charles. This did Funck now bravely confide to the Sultan, who secretly sent messengers to ascertain whether or not Jussuf's perfidy was such as our ambassador had reported. And being convinced of the truth, he did, in the month of November in the year of Our Lord, 1712, cause Jussuf to be deposed and strangled and his riches to be taken to the seraglio by the Kasnadar Agi, not one of the least amid the black eunuchs.

No sooner were the ambitions of this powerful man brought to a violent end than our good King's belief in humanity must once more be shaken. A second war had been declared 'gainst the Muscovites. The janissaries had been purchased. The Sultan had sworn that he would descend from his throne sooner than not fight. Then did we learn by letters we had seized from Tartar prisoners, that our friend the Khan was bargaining to sell His Majesty to King Augustus upon his way home. Each day upon the road would he detach a portion of the escort until Poles and Saxons could face and overpower the little band like a pack of ravenous wolves from out of the surrounding forests. The Muscovites yielded to the Turkish demands and peace was declared, while the Khan had the effrontery to say that he would throw his Majesty with all the contents of his

house into the Dniester if he did not instanter depart from his kingdom.

Such was our own perilous situation, while at home our affairs looked with a very dismal aspect, for the Danes had broken into the Duchy of Bremen and taken our fair city of Stade, while Saxons and Muscovites sat down before Stralsund. However, we took heart again on hearing that General Stenbock had sailed from Sweden with a great army for Pomerania, and, after a great deal of discourse with the Saxon General Fleming, had with rare skill concluded a truce. Indeed it did appear as if all our enemies but Peter, being heartily weary of war, would give us the most honorable terms, were it not for the stumbling-block of King Stanislaus and his own lost crown. This most magnanimous Monarch, wishing above aught else the speedy delivery of His Majesty from out of all his troubles and misery encountered so far from home, offered to abdicate. This did relieve a full score of ambassadors, even as would at times the purging waters of German springs. Stanislaus had said full nobly, "Quand à moi, qui ai servi jusqu'ici d'instrument à la gloire des armes de la Suède, je ne prétends pas être le sujet funeste de leur perte." Word was sent of all this to King Charles at Bender, so that he might see how all hearts in Sweden were filled with hope, and Europe did heave a joyful sigh of relief. Unto it all King Charles answered to Stenbock: —

We have received your letter and see from it that you really design to make peace with the enemy. We should never have imagined that you, without our orders, would have considered such an unheard-of and indefensible step. As soon as this

reaches your hands, without consideration of aught else, or what you may have bound yourself to, you shall at once seek opportunity to dislodge the enemy. We have so much confidence in you that we believe you will do all the more to retrieve the mistake which you have made and give us proof that you in all matters will carry out our will.

This time we will not lay up against you what has already taken place, knowing that it has not been committed out of bad will, but from too hasty counsel. With which we commit you graciously to the care of the Almighty God.

All illusions were thus dispelled and our hopes shattered.

Stenbock did in a most masterly fashion display his great skill as a general and defeat in a great battle the Danes and Saxons at Gadebusch, as also burn the city of Altona; but it profited him but little, for his troops were few, and Muscovites as well as other allies hemming him into the fortress of Tonningen, his whole army must finally capitulate and he himself, after his long and glorious career, die sorrowful in a Danish fortress.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE KALABALIK

THE Khan of the Tartars, the Grand Vizier, and the Seraskier of Bender did now set about in earnest to force His Majesty's journey through those lands where he must, through their joint villainy, fall into the hands of his enemies. Between them, their influence and cunning was such that they finally succeeded in poisoning the Sultan's mind and turning his heart against King Charles.

Even as the Sobieski princes had been decoyed by King Augustus, so was His Majesty to be betrayed by the Khan and Seraskier into the hands of one of King Augustus's generals, de Siniawski, and great were the riches which were thereafter to be conferred on these Turkish Judases.

The Sultan threw poor Funck into a dark and horrible prison and summoned a great divan which he addressed in this manner: —

" Scarcely had I known of the existence of the King of Sweden before his defeat at Poltava when he implored me to grant him an asylum in my empire. I have not, I believe, any need of him, nor have I reason to love or to fear him. Without however consulting other motives than those of a Mussulman's hospitality and generosity, which spread the blessings of their favors on both great and small, I have received this King, and given him succor in all things, as well as also his ministers, his officers, his soldiers and his people, and for three years and

a half have I ceaselessly loaded them with gifts. I have given him an escort with which he might pass to his own lands, as well as the necessary horses, chariots and supplies. This King asked me for a thousand purses, in order to make necessary payments, but I sent unto him twelve hundred purses. After having received them from the hands of my Seraskier at Bender, did he demand a thousand more, and seeking every pretext and excuse, this Prince does now state to my Sublime Porte that his escort is too small, when on the contrary it is too large. Is it now against the laws of hospitality to oblige this Prince to keep his word, and if he will not leave our empire with good words, to force him thereto?

To this did the divan answer: No! To Bender word was sent that His Majesty must pack and leave forthwith, with the army of two thousand janissaries, twelve thousand Turks and Tartars, and fourteen cannon. With them the janissaries brought small red, blue, yellow, and white banners, as also a very large one of blood-red color, as a sign that they would follow our little band till the last drop of their blood had been spilled.

Now did one after the other come to His Majesty to urge upon him the folly of resisting and the hopelessness of further disobeying the mandate of the Sultan. The Seraskier comes and informs His Majesty that if he will not leave with conduct and complaisance he must turn him out forcibly and place him upon French vessels now riding at anchor in Salonica Bay.

The foreign ambassadors did also arrive and humbly implore his gracious Majesty but this once in his life to listen to their prayers, prompted by naught but their great affection for him and interest for his cause and that of humanity. The Baron de Fabrice did even so

far forget himself in the course of his pleading that he finally replied unto His Majesty: "Well, Sire, if Your Majesty will not follow what is dictated by religion, reason and your own glory, I have nothing more to do here and I withdraw my person." His Majesty, however, instead of giving the well-merited rebuke, replied, with much sweetness, that it was neither the time nor place to part in anger. "I know well what I am doing," concluded His Majesty. "It is best we defend ourselves like brave men; believe me, it matters but little that they shoot, that is but fiddle-faddle,[1] they only wish to frighten us into their power. First will our salvos be heard, and then shall we come fairly to hands with them; spite of all, they shall not defeat us."

Thus did his high courage never leave him, nor what he believed worthy a king. In adversity as in prosperity was he equally master of whate'er befell him.

The Kalabalik, or lion-hunt, as it was ever after called amid the Turks, was now going forward. Presently did His Majesty take all manner of precautions to prepare our little camp as best he might for the coming assault, meanwhile riding out daily with but small retinue amid the Tartars, who dared not touch him, as well as among the janissaries, who would not. The Polish magnates, seeing the gathering storm, stole away, leaving but six hundred or thereabouts of their men. The ground was hard frozen, it being in the month of February, so we could neither dig trenches nor build regular breastworks, or barricades, but were commanded to make these of wagons, carts, tables, and beams, mixed, where-

[1] Lappri.

ever possible, with the dung collected from our animals during several years.

The Turkish generals, seeing there would be fighting in earnest and that His Majesty refused point-blank to submit with fair means, did now give orders to withdraw our honorary corps of janissaries as well as to stop all food hitherto brought to our camp by the merchants and Jews. The Sultan had however commanded that no affront be offered His Majesty's person — they should have respect to its sanctity and, when taken, conduct it with all honor and care to Adrianople.

All those who have any knowledge of the greatness of a pasha of the horse-tails and the governor of several provinces, may readily divine how great was the rage of the Seraskier when he saw the boldness of King Charles, who, taking no notice of his commands, defied him within his own province. His imagination was already set on fire at the thought of the extraordinary battle which was about to be fought.

Many of our officers were now ordered to leave the quarters they had occupied for several years and move close up to the walls of the stone house where were His Majesty's quarters. Among them was His Majesty's surgeon-in-ordinary, Doctor Samuel von Schraggenstiena, highly displeased that, *nolens volens*, he must abandon his comfortable rooms shaded by spreading green trees. So hastily was he forced to move that he must leave behind him many precious objects and medicaments, among which were two great copper vessels, each of twenty measures, filled with pleasant-tasting water. On his way to the royal quarters there

met him a Tartar *morsa*, or colonel, with whom he had long been acquainted, and whose son he had cured of a perilous ailment. He now gave a warning to this colonel, telling of the two copper casks which he must leave behind because of their great weight, and that his people should not drink of their contents or they might die of too great purging. This Tartar *morsa*, who knew the royal surgeon to be a skilful and honorable man, who would use no deception, did therefore repeat all he said to his people. Despite all these warnings, however, as soon as upon their entrance into the surgeon's quarters they beheld the two casks as well as the many valuables left perforce behind, they must smell and taste the water; this proved so delightful to their senses that they proceed to take deep draughts of it, as well as also of other pleasant tasting medicaments left in smaller and larger vessels upon the various shelves. As could be foreseen, it was not long ere they were stretched upon their bellies, tearing at the frozen earth with their fingers until the very nails fell off them. They must scratch their itching bodies until they were gory, which helped but little, for over a score died amid horrible cramps, their bowels having burst within them.

The Seraskier and the Khan, being now resolved to fall on without more delay, gave orders to all the Mussulmans under their command to commence the attack. We were however perfectly surprised when some of the leading janissaries arrived and urged His Majesty, who was playing battledore and shuttlecock with Grothusen, to give himself unto their keeping who so greatly adored him. The King deigning no reply, there

commenced a brisk cannonade from all sides around us, whereby fifteen shots went through the King's house. To encourage his hordes, the Seraskier set his many pipers a-playing. As soon as His Majesty heard this loud sound of martial music, which was intended to terrify him, he ordered six trumpeters upon the balcony of his headquarters to blow as bravely as they knew how. One, being killed by an arrow through his nose, fell over the railing into the street, but the five remained a-blowing. Some of our most valiant officers, seeing that this could only end in butchery, now came to King Charles declaring that they had ever been willing, as long as they could move a finger, to risk their lives for him, but this was but outright murder.

Answered His Majesty: "There is no other way but to fight."

The janissaries now advancing all on fire to fall on, Grothusen goes out to them with a few of our men and begins a parley. "Consider well what you are doing, — would you kill this King who loves you so greatly and whom you have promised to serve anywhere His Majesty thinks necessary? The orders of the Sultan are not as severe as you believe."

These words produced such an impression upon the janissaries that they cried out with one voice, "Korkma" [Fear not], "we are of your friends." In the same moment they wheel their regiments about and riding towards the tents of the Seraskier and the Khan demand to be shown the order of the Sultan. These great Turkish commanders, who were about to give orders for their entire army to charge, hearing the janis-

saries say they would even turn their arms upon their own comrades, now reverse the command, admitting it were better to take further counsel on the morrow.

The day had hardly broke when some two score of the janissaries were seized, strangled, and thrown into the river. Fearful of the same fate as their comrades, the remainder offer observance to the Seraskier, who promises each one of them eight ducats, were the King of Sweden but taken alive. The council then decides to send to His Majesty the most worthy of the janissaries, once more begging him to trust himself in their hands. The Seraskier furthermore reads aloud to them all the holy order of his Lord and Master, which he held aloft while they bowed their heads in reverence. He explained unto them how they had rendered themselves guilty of high treason and might be separated from their wives and counted amid the accursed number of the infidels. So the old officers of the janissaries, those that had white beards down to their waists, rid for the last time forward to our camp, holding in their hands white canes, as a sign of peace. Their spokesman declared that they offered their services to His Majesty, assuring him they would serve him as escort and guard him as the apple of their eye, if he would but fare with them to Adrianople to the Sultan, or himself lead them to his own distant lands amid the snows and ice of the north. Would he but go with them, they would sooner be cut into many small pieces than allow any harm to come to a single hair upon his royal head.

All to no avail! In great passion they returned to their comrades and the attack soon began. It was a lovely

Sunday morning on which the lion-hunt took place, and Provost Brenner, who was the chaplain of the day, was strangely enough preaching from the text describing how the Lord Jesus slept peacefully in his boat while the storm was raging round him.

The congregation dispersed, each man taking his position, as we saw the enemy in full march to attack us. Our outer barricades were shortly taken, both by ruse and by the enemy rushing in vast numbers over our poor defences, His Majesty and some fifty others alone escaping into the King's own stone house. This did they find swarming like a bee-hive with plundering Turks and Tartars. We hunted them right joyfully as terriers would rats in a closed cellar. From one hall to the other the battle raged, until the house was so filled with smoke we might only see each other's legs, and the floor was so slippery with blood, neither friend nor foe could keep his footing thereon.

Twice had His Majesty's life been saved as by a miracle, the brave Axel Hård warding off the blows against which the King could not defend himself. At last the house was empty, over three hundred Mussulmans' corpses having been thrown out of the doors and windows. We had washed our faces and bloody hands in Spanish wine from the casks that were brought up from below to refresh our parched throats. Through the shutters of the windows we could see the Turks without, taking counsel how next to proceed. We had not long to wait for the result of their deliberations, for presently the janissaries began shooting arrows with fire and sulphur stuck in hemp upon their points.

They lighted in such numbers upon the roof of our quarters that the score of us that were left in fighting trim, in order not to become roasted were fain to descend to the lower story.

Axel Roos now goes up to His Majesty and counsels him to force his way to the chancellery near by, where the game might, with less heat above us, be started anew.

This was in very deed our last hope. The door was opened and His Majesty, at the head of the little band still left him, rushes out, his sword in his right hand and his pistol in his left. As ill luck would have it, just as he reached the ground where stood a thick barrier of Turks, he trips in one of his great spurs and falls, the Turks then throwing themselves upon him, even as a pack of baying hounds upon the dying boar. His weapons were forthwith wrenched from his hands, his followers all hewn down or made prisoners, and many of the Turks fell to tearing and biting off pieces of His Majesty's coat and trousers in order that they might therewith prove that they had a hand in the capture alive and claim a great reward.

Thus ended the Kalabalik. The Turks screamed with delight at their many prisoners and the great booty they had secured, while His Majesty was led into the tent of the Seraskier. Unto the janissaries posted by the flap he graciously cast a handful of gold ducats he still had by him. His Majesty was the dreadfullest sight I ever saw. Such clothes as still were hanging in rags upon his noble body were so drenched by blood that they were more red than yellow and blue. From his left hand, which was badly wounded, blood dripped to

the ground. The eyebrows were all singed off by the fire of the pistols discharged close to his face. This was so blackened, and sweaty to boot, that not even his Princess sister would have known him, had she had the misfortune to be there. Both the tip of his nose and one ear which had been struck by a sword were bloody and swollen.

But with a firm tread, and his carriage as straight as the trunks of his northern pines, he entered the tent of the Seraskier.

Proud and triumphant he gazed upon his captor, who offered him the seat of honor upon the divan; but His Majesty was too full of concern to seat himself.

"I am enraptured," said the Seraskier, "that Your Majesty has escaped with your life from so great a broil."

Replies the King: "The danger has been a bagatelle, and had my people by the barricades done as well as those within my house, the game would not yet be ended."

"It was a rough game," replied the Seraskier.

"For sport it was too much, for a fight too little," said King Charles.

With his royal hand he had that day sent fifteen Mussulmans to their eternal rest, but of that they made no mention.

His Majesty, indeed, was in the greatest concern, knowing that his chief officers and other soldiers, unless speedily ransomed, would be sold into slavery by those who had taken them prisoners, so he sent a charge to the foreign ambassadors, Mr. de Fabrice and Mr. Jeffreys, as well as to Mr. de la Mottraye, to do all that lay

in their power to purchase back as many as possible of the poor survivors. They were a pitiful sight: the Tartars on horseback did lead them tied and coupled as dogs, behind them, yea, even with halters around the necks of several counts and high officers, as if they had caught horses. They closely searched the prisoners and took from them whatever they had left of gold or silver, watches, earrings or finger-rings. In place of their own clothes, they, being forced to undress, were given filthy Turkish rags as sole protection in this cold month of February. The silver buttons were cut off the coats, that their captors might wear these in strings around their necks. In pieces of bread and in the hearts of figs and other fruit did some of these miserable wretches conceal a few ducats.

The Tartars rigged themselves out in such fashion as to look like monkeys, which they in truth do greatly resemble. Outside their dirty sheepskin coats, they put on the gallooned jackets of the officers and the three-cornered officers' hats under their own caps, often in two or three tiers, while from their belts did they suspend the wigs, using them in place of their thumb and fore-finger, as they had observed us use nosekerchiefs.

Mr. de Fabrice did now succeed in ransoming the greater portion of all our officers and men, but the Seraskier firmly refused to accede to the honorable demand that His Majesty's sword be returned, alleging that he dared not, lest His Majesty should commence fighting alone, and, madman that he was, attack all the soldiers and guards about him.

The King being informed that all his men might not

follow him into captivity, orders the valiant and jolly General Sparre to remain in Bender and procure the enlargement of all that had been left behind or lost. His Majesty himself was placed in a chariot, his sword at last by his side, with sixty of his own men and two hundred Turkish horse, all led by a pasha of two tails; and thus did they journey, first to Demotica, and then on to Timurtasch, which means the iron rock, and is a magnificent castle near to Adrianople, set amid flower-gardens and fountains and surrounded by a large park abounding in game.

I have ever thought that when evil has been done in this sinful world, there is oftenest no one that will bear the blame or the shame. From hence did His Majesty forthwith despatch unto the Sultan accusations against the Grand Vizier Suleiman, the Khan of the Crimea, and the Seraskier of Bender, and did also cause to be remitted to the Sultan the incriminating letters they had written to the Poles and Russians wherein they offered to sell him. But now in his great mercy and justice did the Sultan decide in some measure to punish the culprits and give His Majesty some satisfaction for the great wrongs he had suffered. The Grand Vizier was sent to Bender, that he might there hold examination concerning the whole grievous affair. This led to many executions, namely, sixty-three officers were at once beheaded and some of their bodies set on spikes around the city walls; others, near the camp of General Sparre and his ransomed Swedes, that they also might derive satisfaction from the vengeance taken. Thereafter the soldiers still stationed there did cast lots, and every

third one who draws an unlucky number is hacked to pieces. For the Grand Vizier had set his heart upon doing matters thoroughly. The Seraskier was, during the night, sent to the Sultan with a silken cord around his neck, a terrible sight for this mighty officer to look upon by day and by night on his journey, for he durst not remove it.

Thereupon the Grand Vizier caused the sentence of the Aga to be read aloud in the market-place of Bender, and thus was it framed:

By the grace of God and the wondrous works of His Prophet. I, President in the Council and General of the most mighty Emperor of the Turks, make known unto thee, Keesler Aga, the will of the Sultan. Thou shalt die because of thy treacherous behavior towards the Swedish nation, and thou shalt pay therefor with thy blood and head. Thus speaks the Council, thus ordains the Sultan, thus commands the justice of the Divan and the law of Mussulmans.

To execute this judgment, do I empower Nivangie Soleiman Bassa.

This verdict was no sooner read than the Aga was fetched out and strangled, and his head was then carried around through the Grand Vizier's army and thereafter taken to Adrianople, that also the army there stationed may see it. Behind the pole on which the Aga's head was carried, did there go two criers with lusty lungs and voices who in turn did cry, "Thus does it fare with the man who lifts his hands against an innocent crowned head."

From General Sparre His Majesty received further particulars as to the just retribution that now was meted out.

BENDER on the 15th of *May*, 1713.

MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY AND MIGHTY KING: —

In our sorrow and loneliness God has given us long life enough to see a joyous spectacle, — Ismael Pasha as also one of his chamberlains locked up in the tower of the castle.

This happened the last of April, and it did strengthen all our hearts to see the fate meted out to him which he had designed for us just three months ago. Just see! Thus has the righteous and gracious God paid him for his ungodly, false and wanton act towards Your Majesty and your subjects. Fourteen days earlier he had caused sixty tents to be erected upon the other side of the river, and did encamp there in the greatest magnificence and glory; he had ranged in good order all his equipage and over sixty camels, as well as oxen and wagons and some hundred horses wherewith to march towards Azof. Now upon this same happy day, in the sight of the King of Poland[1] and all the rest of us, did the janissaries and other good fellows come and take it down, pack it together and send it back across the river, and later were all his furniture, clothing and money, and what else was to be found, made note of and sealed. Ismael has made so much ado with his chamberlain, crying and praying, that they have taken him out of the hole in the palace and put him in the seraglio in his own former chamber, until he, as is common parlance in these days, is to be carried away over the sea unto Asia, to a certain place named Sinope, where he is to sit as long as he lives. But many believe he will never reach there, but that his head and his beard will bear each other company on the way to Adrianople, and this with good right. *Actum ut supra!* All this great and evil swarm of courtiers walk around the streets here. And by the same good chance some Swedes and Poles, which he had forced to become Turks, have escaped unto us. Still do we miss some of our people, and those who have returned say they were sent with his womenfolk unto Stamboul, a fortnight ago. The page Hagdorn died three days before his confiscation took place; whether he was poi-

[1] Stanislaus had reached Bender, expecting there to find King Charles.

soned or what these rascals did with him, I know not. But the drummer and several others I sent away instanter as far as the border, to the Colonel Rosocatzski, so that they are out of the way. They are more than ten which were unransomed, but have saved themselves, but the Feif's old woman and a little two-year-old child, were sent away with the Pasha's wives. I begged the mean old fellow one hundred times that he should let the page and the others go, but he would never listen thereto. Therefore has he also met ill luck, the hidebound rascal.

And in order still further to raise His Majesty's spirits, Sparre sent him a miniature he had just painted of King Stanislaus.

But more was to follow. Not only was the Seraskier disgraced and deposed, but so also was the great Tartar Khan, who was shipped to Rhodos, and likewise the Grand Vizier, Suleiman. Thus did these miscreants receive their due. In Suleiman's place was put Ibrahim Pasha, who had been the leader of a band of robbers and cutthroats.

Against the Muscovites war was now declared for a third time, for Ibrahim was eager to fight. Desirous not only to see His Majesty but even to speak with him, he sends the King word that he may come to him in his great tent which he had pitched near that of His Majesty. To this affront His Majesty replied that not only was he too sick, but that neither he nor his officers had the equipage wherewith to dress since their shameful treatment at Bender. For how could a king lower himself so far as to call upon a grand vizier, who is but a subject? Such an answer being both merited and humiliating to the pride of the Mussulmans, there was

naught to do but to strangle Ibrahim, which was done quickly and effectually.

In place of the campaign against Muscovy peace is declared, and one Ali Pasha is raised to Ibrahim's post.

His Majesty did not counterfeit a malady when he kept abed for forty-three full weeks, but did in truth suffer from a tertian fever, which put us in terrible apprehensions and caused us to return with him to Demotica, if he might there during the winter recover his health from the salubrious breezes of the place. God wot, our hopes were mightily fulfilled, for here he grew healthy and vigorous. General Sparre did write to His Majesty from time to time, both so as to hearten him and to give him tidings of the Swedes in Bender. This general was a fine fellow. In 1697 he had been among those who shouted the lustiest to declare the boy Charles fit to rule the country; and at Kliszow, Fraustadt, and Poltava he had been in the van of the assault leading the storming infantry columns. When led away after the Kalabalik, stripped to his shirt with a halter round his neck, by a filthy Tartar horseman, yet could he with a pleasantry and a merry nod greet his comrades as he passed them in this sorry plight. When His Majesty did graciously elevate him to be a count of the realm, he placed Turbaned Turks in his coat of arms, with camels as his supporters, so that his posterity might ever remember his experiences amid the Mussulmans. A strange and droll fellow! Now he writes to His Majesty: —

I have received your Royal Majesty's gracious orders, and I have shown and shall continue with my humble and diligent

devoirs by the King of Poland. This is for me a delightful commission and so much the easier to execute as, apart from the noble and beloved presence of my own gracious Lord, no gentleman can be found of a more generous free temper or whom it be more pleasant to wait upon than King Stanislaus Primus. Having recounted this, I would further say that the soldiers have no shirts, stockings, shoes, or boots, and many have already become Turks; this is bad, and what is worse, there is little to drink but water. Unger has recently been dragged before the Pasha and, when he had received one hundred and fifty strokes on the soles of his feet, he was placed in irons attached to a block. We are living as half-dead, for we have heard nothing for a long season from Adrianople. God grant Your Majesty may be faring according to your wishes; should I fall upon my knees before these stingy swine, they would not lend me another groat. They merely say, "Pay us what you owe us!" Thereto they are very crazy in the head, and they make much noise, and pursue me night and day, shrieking and swearing.

And though the General's letters, as may easily be seen, did give many sad accounts, yet was there much which this humorous and brave fellow did write, which cheered His Majesty upon his sick bed.

Now while His Majesty was daily gaining in strength, he busied himself with the drawing up of a new law for his government office and foreign service, as well as such important matters as the adornment of Stockholm and the support of men of science. Affairs of great consequence were going forward in Sweden, which were shortly to move him to important actions. The estates had been convened, His Majesty's orders forbidding this having arrived too late; and her Royal Highness the Princess Ulrica Eleanora had graciously consented to take seat among the Councillors of the realm. The last

flickering of hope, lit by the victory of Gadebusch, had gone out after Stenbock's surrender at Tönningen, the sad news of the Kalabalik, the fire of Altona, the burning of Helsingfors, the defeat of General Lybecker's expedition, the fall of the good city of Åbo and Peter's continuous victories along the eastern shores of the Baltic. Peace did indeed seem the only alternative.

In their despair, the estates and the Councillors wisely determined to send an ambassador to His Majesty, to beseech him for the love of God and his poor stricken country, to return to it, in whatever manner he deemed best. And for this important errand there was selected the wise, experienced, brave, and honest man, Major-General Liewen. To bring good fortune, he was sent upon his journey on the birthday of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, in the year of our Lord 1713. Three months later he fell upon his knees before his Royal Master in Demotica. Faithfully did he recount to his King the sad state into which our beloved country had fallen through his absence, and that the very government was going to wreck did he remain longer away. Thereupon he handed His Majesty the letter from the Council, in which they full plainly stated that

> the country could be regarded as a body, whose sinews were all severed and from the veins of which all blood had been drained. What it now attempted for defence both by land and sea went on but tardily, for his subjects were filled with melancholy near to despair, which could not be conquered. It did now seem as if there be but a few months before those who still hold ground would totally go under. The poverty was so great that the very officials had neither pen nor paper and the wealthiest must lie abed sixteen hours of the day, being without candles to light the dark hours with.

Greatly did the reading of this affect His Majesty. There was no hope now that Peter might be conquered by the assistance of the Sultan. Also did His Majesty learn that the Muscovites were surrounding his good city of Stettin while the Saxons marched upon Stralsund. Prussia and Hanover had treacherously joined the many enemies, thinking now had come the time for them to seize upon the Swedish provinces in Germany.

In his great wisdom King Charles now bestirs himself to put a period to this sad Turkish chapter and set out for home. To this end he sent unto the Sultan a memorial, begging him graciously to issue a firman to the commanders of his wide empire, by virtue of which they should suffer His Majesty and his suite to pass, by whatsoever road they choose, after they had paid one more visit to Bender.

Grothusen, now as ever indispensable, having a perfect understanding of the Ottoman humor, was sent to Constantinople, not only to treat with the Sultan and the Grand Vizier, but also to borrow the great sums of money sorely needed for the many creditors. Unto the Pasha who had served him during his illness did His Majesty, with much generosity, present Grothusen's coat of sables. It was a sad loss, but the poor fellow could have used it but a short time, as he was to meet his death on reaching Stralsund. Be this as it may, in Constantinople did he receive much honorable attention; not alone were he and his embassy permitted to walk about the streets, but they were admitted into the holy and venerated Temple of St. Sofia.

The Grand Vizier had the impudence to say unto him

that he believed his tidings too good to be true, and that His Majesty would not be suffered to return by the city of Bender, lest he commit some new madness. Nevertheless the Grand Vizier put into the hands of Grothusen the firman giving free passage "unto the most worthy of glory of all the princes who confess Jesus, the chosen among the high potentates of the religion of Messiah, the judge of all dissensions which arise among Christians; the Lord of honor and glory, dressed in splendor and majesty." Thereunto did the Sultan also state that Charles the Twelfth, King of the Swedes, the Goths and the Vends, as well as prince and lord of many other countries, would for ever after be his friend, and he desires the Lord God on high to make His Majesty happy and set him upon the road of salvation.

While Poniatowski hastened back to our camp with these good tidings, the brisk Grothusen did not find the creditors so full of blessings. There were Turks and Jews and Greeks, Persians and Arabs, as well as also the English, French and Dutch merchants, and Mazeppa's nephew, who had all made us constant loans during our five sad years, some at twenty, some at forty, and some usurers at eighty per centum interest. As Grothusen could not borrow enough to pay older debts and more clamorous and unreasonable creditors, he arranged that they and their families should attend our soldiers on the road across Europe even unto Sweden, where they may live in happiness and contentment until His Majesty or his government find the funds wherewith to pay them. And a great crowd of them did in this manner jour-

ney unto our country and live there for many years to come.

King Stanislaus having started for Deux Ponts in the land of King Louis, His Majesty, King Charles, wrote letters of grateful acknowledgment to the Sultan Achmed III and his high officers and exchanged costly presents with them all. He then divided all his people living in the Sultan's empire into five companies, each under the command of a general, and he warned them all to speak no evil of the Turks, but sooner manifest satisfaction at the politeness which had been shown them. All these preparations did make Sparre mighty glad so that he writ His Majesty once more: "God be praised that it has been ordained that I should lead the people out of Egypt. Now they will come into Canaan's land, and I wish them further and greater good fortune than they hitherto have known; may they pass securely through until we meet again, better satisfied than we have been in the land of the unbeliever."

On the 20th of September, 1714, His Majesty saddled his own horse, that he might set out on his journey from Demotica to Sweden. The Turks assemble in great multitudes, that they may for the last time gaze with burning devotion upon the stranger whom they had loved and whose lion's courage had filled their warrior hearts with such rapture. Had he not observed the strictest laws of the Koran? Had he not, even as the Faithful, prayed during the morning and evening hours, shown charity and hospitality and abstained from all wine? Would he not rather fight than breathe? As His Majesty rode through the crowds, they knelt and

shouted their blessings, while from Timurtasch the Grand Vizier sent him as a parting gift a costly sabre and eight Arab horses.

On the 25th of October the King, being arrived at the Turkish frontier, gives directions to all his people and tells his officers that he there takes leave of them all save only Düring and Rosen and myself, and with us alone will seek his kingdom once more a-horseback across Europe. I with two others of the horse were to travel as grooms. Unto me was awarded the honor of waiting upon His Majesty.

The Secretary Feif was now directed to prepare in His Majesty's name such passes as would be required by the three travelers, in order that they might traverse with as little discomfort as possible the many states that lie betwixt Turkey and the Swedish lands. To the King was given one describing him as the Captain Carl Frisk; Rosen was named Captain Johan Palm, and Düring, Erik von Ungern. His Majesty, in order further to disguise himself, did cover his close-clipped head with a dark wig of elegant curls, and in place of the blue and yellow coat by which he was known and sung through Europe's lands, he put on a smart coat in the style of King Louis's court, and this was a sombre, dark-brown cloth, lined throughout with white.

Off we rode flying, even as if we were couriers bringing tidings of a great and victorious battle. When we had however rode for some twenty hours, His Majesty scarce giving himself time to take nourishment, so great was his eagerness to cover the miles that separated him from his lands, we lost the way in a dark forest. A faint

fire in the distance raised our hopes, and coming upon it we found a swineherd sleeping by the embers. The boor was surprised and frightened, to wit, when awakened by His Majesty; but when he had rubbed the sleep out of his eyes, he consented, on threats as well as persuasion, to set us aright upon our road. On the morrow a worse adventure befell us, for Erik von Ungern, unused to such a breakneck speed, as also to go wellnigh completely without rest or nourishment, became so sore between his legs and so exhausted, that, being too much of a soldier to complain, he did finally, without speaking a word, fall off his horse like a man hit by a bullet in the thick of battle. We did indeed for some time take him for dead, until he opens his eyes, and looks down between his legs to see whether the mare were yet there.

His Majesty, unable to tarry, decided it were wisest to leave him behind with the postilion who had come along with the fresh horses from the last posthouse. Now this adventure did all turn out to Von Ungern's great advantage, for the rest of us once more lost our way while Von Ungern after gaining rest and strength in a post-chaise, did reach Vienna at the same time as we, when he could once more join us and bestride a horse.

Moonlight illuminated the skies of the Emperor's provinces, the roads were good and the innkeepers of complaisant and obliging temper, so that it would indeed have been a fleet hunting dog that could have kept pace with our horses as they sped through Regensburg, Nürnberg, Bamburg, Würtzburg, Manau, and on to Cassel.

Many a place along the road did we arouse grave suspicion, and His Majesty well-nigh betrayed himself through some particularity or other by which he was known. The two other officers, of whom I have made mention, would at such time treat His Majesty with much familiarity or disrespect, in order that those who with curiosity were awaiting his coming, the news of which had spread like wildfire throughout the Holy Roman Empire, could by no means take him for the great King himself, but rather some advance courier.

Coming however into the country of Hessen, the matter was not so easy. The Count of this fair province was betrothed to the Princess Ulrica Eleanora and had given the strictest orders unto his officers and servants to apprise him the moment His Majesty enters his capital of Cassel. Knowing also full well that the King must exchange horses at the *Golden Eagle*, the Count sends there the Brigadier Kagge, a Swedish gentleman now in Hessian service, who is to inform the Count the moment His Majesty sets foot on ground and hold him there until the Hessian Count comes to do him honor.

It was but two days that the Brigadier had sat before the posthouse, watching travelers and chaises come and go, relieved by his servants at such times as he needs rest, when along the southern road come a-galloping our three horsemen, with us grooms scarce fifty paces behind, the horses covered with sweat and foam, the riders bespattered with dirt. As we alight, the old Brigadier felt his heart swell big within him, and beat against his ribs, for despite the disguise he believes he is looking upon his

great King. Lest he lay bare his trepidation and great joy, he approaches us in an easy manner and inquires of us with nonchalant air whether we were not Swedes, what was our errand, and also whether our King would not soon pass that way.

To all this His Majesty gave answers, inquiring artfully in his turn of the Brigadier who he might be, from what country he came, and how long had been his service in Hessen. Being unable politely to dispense with Kagge's company, we were forced to invite him to stay for supper with us, to which he gladly acceded. And I, in company with the other two grooms, having stabled the winded horses, were thrown bundles of hay in an adjacent chamber to that occupied by the officers, from where, stretching our weary limbs, we might overhear all that passed, as well as also be ready to lend assistance, should such be needed. As fortune would have it, I did also discover a crack in the joint of the oak paneling from where I might observe all that passed, yet without being seen by Kagge.

Now did His Majesty, being unable to divest himself of his accustomed courtesy, inquire after the health of the Landgrave, and put other such questions as are usual with monarchs. Von Ungern and Palm, having left the chamber to order the supper, were much disturbed upon their return to find His Majesty sitting and conversing, with his hat upon his head, while the artful Kagge did stand respectfully with his under his arm, His Majesty quite unconscious of the difference, — an attitude no gentleman of equal station would ever have permitted. To make good the situation, Von Ungern

must slap His Majesty familiarly upon the shoulder, push his chair with scant ceremony out of the way to make room for his own, and in other manner treat Captain Frisk as one hungry brother-in-arms well might behave to another, when out campaigning.

'Mid familiarity, as well as much contradiction of what Captain Frisk did advance, the supper proceeded right merrily. Once more did Kagge, however, believe after all he must be right; for His Majesty drank naught but water, despite the fact that the Brigadier had ordered up a couple of bottles of the best the cellar afforded.

"Apparently, Monsieur le capitaine," he said, "you have renounced wine, like His Majesty, your august Master."

"Not at all," Captain Frisk replied; "I always make my meal without drinking so that when I am full of victuals I may enjoy the wine all the more."

Thereupon, the meal over, His Majesty fills up a big beaker, proposes toasts and sings Swedish songs merrily with the others. They did thus not only drink the health of the Landgrave of Hessen, but Kagge courteously proposed His Majesty of Sweden, and a safe return home to him.

The officers' meal being over, we hastened, as agreed upon, to the stable, saddled the fresh horses and brought them before the door of the *Golden Eagle*, to where the Brigadier escorts His Majesty. But as we were getting into the courtyard, some greatness and majesty in the manner of King Charles roused a feeling of veneration, as also a great longing and love in the soul of the Swede who had so long been a stranger to his native land, and,

pushing me aside, and as it seemed scarce knowing what he did, he holds in my place His Majesty's stirrup and stands with bare head. Then did His Majesty turn unto him and say, "Farewell, my good Kagge, greet the Landgraf from Charles of Sweden." "God bless the King," was the choking response. As our horses clattered out of the courtyard, the Hessian uniform no longer belied the Swede, who knelt upon the cobble stones, the tears streaming down his old face.

The great hero had passed into the night.

On we went, up through Germany and Lotz, until on the fourteenth day after leaving Turkey, having rid 268 Swedish miles in that space of time, at one o'clock of the morning, we knocked on the Tribsee gate of our good city of Stralsund by the Baltic. "Who comes there?" said the guard within. "Officers with despatches from the King, who must at once be admitted," replied His Majesty. The guard, being loath to let us enter at this hour, did reason we must tarry until the customary hour of the morrow. But His Majesty being more than insistent, the officer on guard was called out, who did send a corporal unto the commanding General, Ducker, in order to still the disturbance. The commandant now being all agog, and also expecting shortly news of how His Majesty might purpose journeying from Turkey, gave orders that we be admitted and himself drew hastily on his boots and breeches. Scarce had he reached the door of his home ere King Charles alights from his horse. The general peers curiously into the face of the rider, then falls upon his knees, praising God on high he had lived to see this day.

Ah, 't was a joyous night! There was no more sleep in Stralsund, for like wildfire the great tidings spread from street to alley and from market-place to square. Rockets and fireworks burst under the moonlit sky; bonfires crackled in every open meeting-place, and kegs are joyfully rolled forth, that the happy burghers and the soldiers, frenzied with joy, may make merry together. "King Charles has returned! Our King is here!" shouted the huzzaing multitude as they danced and leaped in the streets. Couriers sped out of the gates, as balls shot out from the mouths of cannons, to spread the glad news over every part of the Swedish kingdom. Above their heads did they swing their caps as, galloping and bawling, they fled out across the countryside.

Lucky it was that the morrow was a Sunday, for the good citizens could do no work in their joy, but were much more fit to chant the *Te Deum* in the Church of St. Nicholas or to carouse or to flock through the streets, where princes and ambassadors now were arriving, one upon the heels of another, as well as high and noble guests from the nearby cities, bishoprics, and duchies. All wished to express their joy that His Majesty, after so many years and great dangers, was happily returned to his own lands. In such manner did King Charles come back to his people.

Now lay before him a more desperate task than he ever yet had encountered. How had he best mend the broken vessel, how meet the many foes who surrounded on all sides what remained of his kingdom and its provinces? The day after his arrival, he writes unto King Louis the Fourteenth, who had but few months left to live: —

MONSIEUR MON FRÈRE: —

Je n'ai pas hesité de me rendre dans mes États du moment que j'ai appris que Vostre Majesté avoit glorieusement terminé ses longues guerres. Mon envoyé extraordinaire aura l'honneur de rendre compte à Vostre Majesté de mon arrivée en Pomméranie, et de la confiance avec laquelle je compte sur l'amitié de Vostre Majesté. Elle m'en a déjà donné des marques convainçantes; j'éspere qu'Elle voudra à l'heure qu'il est juger par ses propres intérêts des miens, et agréer que nos intentions soyent concertées. J'ai sérieusement celle de convaincre Vostre Majesté que je suis veritablement,

Monsieur mon Frère,
Vostre bonfrère
CAROLUS.

STRALSUNDT le 13 *Nov.* 1714.

This letter did indeed bear good fruit, for Louis, Sweden's only remaining friend, promised to pay His Majesty a yearly subsidy of ninety thousand pounds. And sorely was it needed. For though the finances of our poor country had for many years been in a pitiful state and the royal treasury as empty as an idiot's brain, that was as nothing compared to their present disastrous condition. To make matters worse, the King of England, as Elector of Hanover, did join his mighty fleet and forces unto those of the allies now holding the Swedish Lion at bay. Sixty thousand soldiers were gathered to watch his death-agony, or, even better, to take him alive and fetter him. Betwixt themselves, they had already reached agreement how best to divide the Swedish provinces, or what remained of them, for half the kingdom was gone since the days of Altranstädt, as well as more than 50,000 brave Swedish soldiers. Denmark would take Holstein, Stralsund, Rügen and

Pomerania; Prussia, Wolgast and Stettin, on which His Majesty could not pay the debt of 400,000 écus, while the traitorous Hanover cast sheep's eyes upon Bremen and Werden. Thus was to end our dominion along the shores of the Baltic, Tsar Peter having in his grasp all the East Baltic lands.

Though His Majesty had learned much during the years he had spent among the heathen, yet how to sue for peace he knew not, nor would he learn it this side of the grave. With scorn did he reject the Emperor's proposals to send his ambassadors to a diet at Brunswick for the purpose of discussing a peace for all the kingdoms and principalities of Europe. The far-spent Louis did also send unto our camp at Stralsund Colbert, Count of Croissy, that perchance by his diplomatic art and address he might bring about an understanding betwixt His Gracious Majesty and Frederick of Prussia. Alas, Frederick craved too much and His Majesty would cede naught. After days and nights spent together amid the bullets and cannon-balls of the trenches and bastions, the King would but reply to the untiring de Croissy, when he would venture to renew his discourse on an amiable adjustment of our broils: "Colbert, veni, male dicamus de rege" — His Majesty not lowering himself to use other tongue than the Latin when unable to make himself understood in his own beloved Swedish. Of his own poor weak confederates, none remained. The Duke of Holstein owned not a square mile of his dominions, Poland remembered His Majesty but as a torrent that for a short space of time had turned all things out of their course, while Stanislaus

cowered under the shadow of France in the little principality of Deux Ponts.

But King Charles was King Charles, and greatest of all in the hour of adversity, and never will the muse of history record a loftier and grander example of strength and resolution, of patience and endurance, than Sweden showed in these her darkest hours. Terrible calamities had she suffered, albeit true she would long ago have succumbed had such wars as she had waged under Gustavus Adolphus, Christina, Charles the Tenth, Charles the Eleventh, and his own glorious Majesty, been fought within the borders of our own kingdom.

To his undaunted courage was added the knowledge that under his own leadership Swedish soldiers had never fled, nor had any other captain ever seen his men perform such deeds of valor for his sake. His Majesty did truly combine in his gallant person all those qualities which make a great general. Swift in conception and understanding, ever seizing the golden moment, quick in all military manœuvres, powerful in assault, no one could bear comparison with him. His strength lay in himself. He made misfortune so lofty by his scorn that at times it seemed to differ but little from success. He now writes unto his field-marshal, Count Niels Bjelke, that he must constantly have his God before his eyes and walk the road straight ahead, seeking the King's and kingdom's weal; in all things do right without regard for person. Then no one in the world could speak ill of him with success before His Majesty. But though His Majesty could inspire all by his courage, he could not thus create soldiers and money.

Therefore, His Majesty now orders that copper be coined to take the place of the silver, which may then be withdrawn to supply the needs of his soldiers and supplies. It was still harder to procure soldiers, for such men of fighting age as might yet be found in Sweden were few and far between and thereto most unwilling to join the regiments. Thus did it become necessary to strain unto the utmost the laws compelling persons of station as also the guilds to furnish the requisite troops. Yea, it was even needful to publish new laws where the old proved too lenient, and to take the fearful fellows from church in the midst of service, or seize them in the public places, or drag them out of the mines, to put a soldier's coat upon their cowardly backs.

And to think that these cravens were of the selfsame stock which the Turkish rulers would purchase as slaves at any price, that they by them with their own women might propagate a strong and brave race!

The armies of the allies were now fast closing in on land, while the English and Danish fleets had constant encounters with our own ships on the waters behind us. His Majesty gave himself but little rest. Presently was he on Rügen; anon, on his fleet; and then back amidst the fortifications of Stralsund where ever-growing numbers of bombs and cannon-balls were daily increasing the havoc. The brave little garrison made one furious, frenzied attack in the neck of another, King Charles ever in the van and the regiments of the enemy melting away wherever he appeared. But all this availed but little, for day by day the defences crumbled, and though His Majesty orders the outer houses de-

molished in order that new masonry for the gaps might therewith be constructed, still the breaches grow wider and more difficult to defend 'gainst the great numbers of the enemy.

Amid it all came the tidings of the marriage of her Royal Highness the Princess Ulrica Eleanora, to the Prince of Hessen Cassel, where the old Dowager Queen, now past four-score years, did the honors in the place of His Majesty.

The outer trenches having at last been taken, as also one of the great gates of the city, the General Ducker as well as the other officers came unto His Majesty and begged him return into Sweden lest he be taken in the surrender of the city, which could but hold out a few days longer. It was little Christmas Eve when, with only Ducker, Rosen and a page, he went on board a boat so small it held but three pairs of oars. All night long they drifted about, picking their way 'mid the ice-floes, seeking a passage unseen by the hostile frigates. God in high heaven holding his protecting hand over the frail bark did cause them to be picked up first by the galley, *The Whale*, and thereupon by the *Snap-up*. It was Christmas Eve, early in the morning; day had not broken; the wind blew snow and sleet furiously in the faces of the four passengers who 'mid great danger slid down the rope to the little rowboat which first had been lowered into the milky sea. So as to keep it from capsizing, the *Snap-up* kept to windward. When near enough to shore, the oarsmen made for the lee of a great rock.

Such was the homecoming of Charles the Twelfth.

When after fifteen years of absence he once more sets foot upon the shores of his own country, not a Swede is there to meet him. No drum nor trumpet heralds his coming, merely the howling of the winter wind greets him as that afternoon, with his threadbare blue coat wrapped about his spare figure, accompanied by three drenched horsemen, he gallops into his town of Ysted.

The Sweden he returns to is bare and desolate, groaning in her misery, praying for peace. With her last dying breath the old Queen Dowager sends word unto her grandson to bring them peace from Europe. The Councillors did also declare that things had never looked with so melancholy an aspect, never had they seen blacker days; the welcome that meets His Majesty is a prayer for peace. And yet, in all his misery, peace is farthest from the thoughts of King Charles.

The one enemy whom he can easily reach being his detested cousin, Fredrik the Fourth, King of Denmark, no sooner has the money collected in exchange for the copper tokens provided sufficient men than His Majesty prepares to cross the ice upon the Sound. A thaw however sets in, and the men who have been dragged from their homes and hiding-places to be made soldiers being scarcely sufficient for an assault, His Majesty must contain his impatience for a few months. Then however, the bonfires were lit from mountain-top to mountain-top, announcing to the peasants of Norway that the wounded Swedish Lion was crouching, once more ready to spring and rage in the bowels of their kingdom, to reach the vitals of their Danish sovereign.

Well-nigh superhuman effort had been needed for the

King to procure the necessary funds and supplies. It was the nation's death-gasp. To assist him in this task, His Majesty did appoint the Holstein Baron Karl Goertz to be his Chancellor, setting him above all officials of the realm and laying the housekeeping and internal government of the kingdom solely in his hands. This did greatly astonish the Senate and Councillors, who knew not the man and had no advices in the matter until he issued them their orders. While His Majesty had been sore pressed for money in Turkey, the baron had with great wit and artfulness stood by him, sending him many a bag of silver.

Ah, there was indeed to be a sad ending to this reckless stewardship— as cruel and lawless a one as ever disgraced the judgment-hall of Swedish nobles. Goertz however did nothing without the privity and approbation of His Majesty and had his royal word that he was ever to be accounted blameless. Shame upon Swedish nobles that they held not that word sacred! Never was man who had more audacity or promptness of ideas, nor was any readier in extricating himself from the most difficult postures. No plan was too vast for his daring humor, nor did he stick at any means to compass it. Prayers, promises, threats, the naked truth or veiled lie, he juggled with them all, even as does the conjurer with his balls upon the green at the country fair. With prodigious energy and great statecraft did he labor for His Majesty, overriding every difficulty, the empty treasury, jealous nobles, the infuriated clergy, and the cursing peasantry. Never was man more hated within the borders of the kingdom, for he bore upon his shoul-

ders all the blame, not only for what he durst propose, but for the sanction given thereto by His Majesty, for whom all was undertaken. For his King could do no wrong. Like unto the great Richelieu, he silenced any questioning of the royal prerogative, but, alas, unlike this great Frenchman, he labored for a hopeless cause. Born, as it were, for this last desperate hour, and ignorant of the word *impossible*, he was never void of counsel. Is more money needed? — he mortgages and sells the crown lands, lays violent hands upon the bank securities, and, caring naught for what interest he might pay, he takes gold wherever it may be had. Loans are forced from mighty unwilling subjects and taxes are levied on salaries that for years had been unpaid. He took the last spoon out of the nobleman's mouth and killed the last cow in the peasant's stable. For King Charles must fall upon Norway and Goertz must raise the regiments, although the seed was now being sown by the women and children and the aged and infirm were harvesting the meagre crops.

A small army is however, at last, recruited and mustered, with infinite diligence, and we cross mountains and valleys to sit down before the city of Christiania. This whole affair ended miserably, for the Danish fleet guarding the Straits of Elsinore hindered the arrival of His Majesty's artillery which was to storm the citadel Akershus. The city itself is as empty as a beggar's purse, the rich citizens and burghers having fled, taking all their valuables with them and leaving empty larders behind. Supplies running short, our dear King casts his eyes upon the fortress of Fredriksten and the

city of Fredriskhald lying at its foot, not far from the Swedish border. Thither we return, but this fortress proves impregnable and the Norwegians shoot the city afire, burning up homes with friends and foes alike, and two thousand brave Swedish soldiers, and what was worse, two great generals were thereby shot dead or burned amid the general conflagration. Ill fortune does never come singly, for the supplies which our soldiers were starving for and which were piled high on many a great transport were all captured or sunk by the Captain Tordenskjold, a gallant Norwegian of remarkable conduct in the Danish service, thereby at one fell stroke destroying all wherefor Baron Goertz had so long sweated blood. Thus ended this campaign.

His Gracious Majesty had found no time, during the year he had been at home, to see his sister, and it was now twelve years since they had met. He had been highly pleased by the ripe melons wherewith she had sent him her loving greetings, as also the purse she had knitted and the marmalade she had prepared with her own hands out of the sugared peels of oranges. His Majesty did now, out of a loving and brotherly heart, decide to call upon her Royal Highness, the Princess Ulrica Eleanora, in the cloister of the Holy Saint Bridget at Vadstena, where the Princess was resting while her recent bridegroom was fetching his stallions over from Hessen. A surly boatman is found to convoy him across the stormy sea to the cloister walls, whereafter many a complimentary and tender word is spoken by His Majesty, and greatly did the Princess appreciate the honor and her brother's royal complaisance.

This pleasant duty was soon over, and dismissed from His Majesty's mind, which now turned to far weightier matters and problems of great import. While revolving these, he visits the pleasant city of Lund, renowned throughout our kingdom as well as among students the world over for its old cathedral and the university filled with learned doctors and zealous students. In the autumn of 1716 the King did here take residence, and remain until the spring blossoms of 1718.

Many a memorial from his oriental sojourn surrounded His Majesty. Here, amid the 252 houses which the city contained, 131 of which were warm houses, we found installed many of the creditors who had followed along from Bender and Adrianople and crossed through Europe with our little army. Some of the Swedish officers had, it is true, desired to leave them there in Stralsund where the bombs rained thickest, but this His Majesty did with great anger and reproof condemn, sending them safe and sound, French, Poles, Greeks, Turks and Tartars, all across into Sweden. Wrestling with all the miseries of indigence and not speaking our Swedish tongue, they sought employment, and some became barbers and some interpreters, while others of the Turks prepared coffee, wherein they greatly excelled. Many a year did they here labor, waiting to be repaid the moneys with which they had parted at such usurious rates.

His Majesty, being of a studious and scientific bent, did now take delight in attending the lectures of the professors, and did with praiseworthy attention listen unto their learned arguments and disputations, being in this a

model unto the studiously inclined throughout the land, or those who might have been so disposed had they not been dragged off to complete the regiments, reduced by the last Norwegian affair. Oft did His Majesty gladden the hearts of the librarians and those aged cripples who dusted the folios, by entering the library, when he would seat himself and read the Doctor August Pfeiffer's admirable "Antimelancholia et Antichiliasmus" and "Der Jesuiten Christenthum." Also mathematical treatises did he take down off the shelves and give them attentive perusal and study. He called to Lund the scientist and theologian, Emanuel Svedberg, in later days to become so celebrated all over the world under his ennobled name of Swedenborg. In the fields of mathematics, astronomy, physics and chemistry, did they roam together, holding much wise discourse, as also solving algebraic problems, in order therewith sweetly to shorten the evening hours.

To the infinite honor and satisfaction of the learned fraternity, His Majesty did now appoint the Professor Rhyzelius, "Primus, Court and Drabant Preacher," with a salary of six hundred silver dollars in silver coin, with one course for dinner and one for supper from out of the royal kitchen, and the feeding of his horse in the royal stable. Round about in the houses of the professors and clergy, as also in some of the great halls, were the troops quartered, but His Majesty, being now greatly indisposed because of a cough, could not drill them as much as was his wont. Fortunately the loving forethought of his solicitous Princess sister provided him with a skull-cap as well as several wigs, by the wear-

ing of which she assured him his bodily ills would shortly disappear. His Majesty, deeming the stomach the true seat of all distempers, wherever else they might manifest themselves, ate naught for a week but the smallest rations of bread, therewith drinking great quantities of water to clear his whole system of all its impurities. The Princess, taking His Majesty's indisposition greatly to heart, writes him: "After having committed the brother of my heart to the loving care of the Almighty, I would express the pleasure it would afford me to hear that Your Majesty had commenced lying in a bed, and thereto do I wish Your Majesty a pleasing companion, to which my dear Lord and all of Sweden would say Amen!" His Majesty did full speedily recover, but as to bedded or wedded, he would none of it, despite prayers of either Princess or people.

But I must proceed with my memoirs, though 'tis well-nigh too sad a story and too much a matter of grief to me to renew the blackness of the last days of my hero's life.

Charles the Twelfth was now thirty-five years old. Despite the strenuous life he had led, and the many vicissitudes of fortune which had powdered his temples with gray, he was in the prime of his vigor and early manhood. His frame was of iron, his mind alert, and his temper brave and resolute to the last. These qualities, combined with long experience in every kind of military undertaking, had made him the greatest captain of his age.

But little had our dear country profited thereby. Sweden and Finland were in a most lamentable condi-

tion. Over their prostrate and bleeding bodies did King Charles form a new army of sixty thousand soldiers. He turned stones into bread. Goertz, ever successful in resources, squeezed the gold ducats out of the Amsterdam merchants, making every promise and contract under the sun except an honest one. The silver service of the state, yea, the very brass and bronze cannons brought home as trophies from earlier wars, were all coined into real or counterfeit money.

Nay, more, Goertz, believing Sweden's final salvation lay alone in a peace with at least Peter and Frederick of Prussia, did so insinuate himself into their good graces and gain confidence in their counsels that we were like to come to a peaceable accommodation. The baron and Peter put their heads together with mighty caution at the château of Loo while the good merchants were counting out their ducats in Amsterdam. Also in Berlin was the sly Brandenburger outwitted and persuaded to change his previous sour mien to smiles. Conferences were well under way. The price might be high, but better to pay it, believed the baron, and save his adopted country from complete ruin. But all his labor was indeed of no avail. The contriver of this fine structure sees it fall to pieces as a house of cards. Says His Majesty: "Let us beat the Danes or we do nothing!" To this end must Norway be crushed, and I thought verily, with such an army so excellently equipped, her fate was sealed.

What Swede will ever recall the fateful year 1718 but with a heavy heart! The die is cast and our new army is soon in full march. Methought the first advance

showed but little alacrity, and I make no doubt but the miserable condition of our country had its effect on the men, for those we were leaving behind lived on bread made more of bark than corn. But the King's dexterity of management and desperate valor soon put new life into the troops. Mountain passes and border fortresses are taken by storm. Where our supply ships cannot pass through narrow waters, they are dragged over the land until we reach such seas as they may again be launched upon.

His Majesty commands the southern army. It is near the end of October and we have left behind the entire desolation of our country, where the frost and wild autumn winds had stripped our lovely birches even to the last leaves. Before us rise the mountains of Norway and as I look in His Majesty's gallant face, whose sudden changes I had learned to apprehend, methinks I read: "I will look unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

We sit down before the city of Fredrikshald, which soon surrenders. His Majesty then orders trenches to be dug that were finally to creep up the hill till we should come near enough to storm the fine fortress of Fredriksten. I know not well how the next melancholy days passed, but I do remember that the thirtieth of November being the first Sunday in Advent, King Charles gives orders that all work upon the ditches should cease till the day's services are over. And His Majesty mounted his English thoroughbred and rode unto his headquarters in the nearby valley, that he might there be given spiritual strength by taking part in the morning and

afternoon services. His chaplain did read from the Holy Bible the chapter which relates how our blessed Lord came riding into the city of Jerusalem, and he expounded thereupon with much warmth and discernment. The afternoon services being ended, His Majesty held a council with all his generals, and unto each did he give his minutest directions so that none might fail in his duty, but the common plan be well and sagaciously advanced.

The early winter day was over and the dusk of evening fast falling upon the pine-clad Norwegian mountain slopes as King Charles, wrapped in his blue cape and followed by but a few officers, rode back into camp. There was much shooting and disturbance from the fortress walls above, as if the enemy might mayhap be thinking of some sortie. His Majesty alights from his horse, and passing the little hut which had been built for him in the very trenches, wherein he dwelt amid his burrowing soldiers, he went forward and up to the foremost trench, where he might best measure the remaining distance and more intently watch the workmen who had now resumed their task.

The moon rose even as the old town clock struck nine, and lit up the busy scene. From above fell constant cannon- and musket-balls, whilst fire-balls and rockets darted across the evening sky. Every once in a while one of the three hundred busy workers was hit, but as quickly carried away and his spade, hoe, fascine, or gabion picked up by another who had moved forward to take his place.

The French engineer, Maigret, did greatly encourage

the men, while His Majesty, coming out of the trench, rested his head upon his arms on the embankment above it.

Now this did greatly distress the officers standing directly below His Majesty in the ditch, and they earnestly, though respectfully, entreated him to have a greater care for his life and to leave the posture where he was a target for the enemy. Answers the King as had ever been his wont: "Have no care."

A moment after, these officers heard a dull hollow sound as when a stone is cast into a swamp. Being much wrought up with anxiety and excitement, each of them did feel as if he had received a sword-thrust in the heart, when suddenly a hoarse whisper from the Adjutant-General Kaulbars breaks the awful stillness: "Lord Jesus! the King is shot!"

Tenderly did they bear the dear body down and see in the ghastly moonlight how a falconet ball had crushed the beloved face, going through the right temple and out through the left.

The soul of the war was dead and Sweden's glory had passed with him!

They bore him home on their shoulders, his boys in blue, with his face towards the Polar Star, and the beat of the muffled drums rolling from mountain to mountain. Gone was now the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for unto dust would shortly be rendered dust. Slowly they wound their way down through the valleys and across the noiseless bosom of the waters, where the evil tidings had spread far before them, — back to the city by the sea. In his hands lay his naked sword,

THE BODY OF CHARLES XII BEING CARRIED ACROSS THE NORWEGIAN MOUNTAINS

From the Painting by Gustaf Cederström in the National Gallery, Stockholm

and over his temples the victor's wreath, while the triple crowns of the Swedes, the Goths, and the Vends were strewn across the warrior breast. They laid him 'mid his sires on the Island of the Knights, where echoes whisper glories of the Vasa race.

The last great son was gone.

(Here ends Colonel Klingspor's Diary)

Through wisps of naked brush moans the winter gale, gaining in voice as it shrieks unchecked across dreary wastes and stiffened bog-land, up to the endless slopes of pine and fir. It sighs and groans again as it lifts their great branches, tossing icicles and snow toward the leaden heavens. Beyond stretch the great lakes, bearing from shore the late autumn leaves, while far out ride the dark waves crested with foam.

Over the Swedeland crouch hovel and hut, gaping in misery and squalor, filled with winter, on their knees in the drifts. Cold are the chimneys, gone are the windows and doors. They seem to stand patient, waiting for the merciful clutch of the wind. It will leave no sign of the life that once was theirs.

Dead lies the Lion of the North.

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